

**THE IMPACT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON THE CULTURE OF
TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RURAL SCHOOLS OF THE EASTERN CAPE**

by

ABIGAIL YOBE

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SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR N.P GROOTBOOM

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DECLARATION

Name: **Abigail Yobe**

Learner number: **43769683**

Degree: **Master of Education in Education Leadership and Management**

The Impact of Instructional Leadership on the Culture of Teaching and Learning in Rural Schools of the Eastern Cape

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

DATE

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents, Mr and Mrs Hycienth Kubiak (Deceased) and to all my beloved siblings.

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My profound gratitude goes to the ALMIGHTY GOD, for making this dream a reality. The book of Hebrew Chapter 3 verse 4 states: “For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God”. I constantly drew strength from this Bible verse, it strengthened my resolved to complete this dissertation and it helped keep me calm all through the hectic process.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning in ten rural schools of the Eastern Cape categorised as performing and under performing schools. The research utilises the transformational leadership theory in its theoretical analytical framework as the model for effective leadership. The research argues that principals' instructional leadership can significantly improve teacher engagement, teacher collaboration and learner performances in the ten rural schools.

The study draws on the qualitative research methodology, instruments utilised are interviews of teachers, principals and top education officials within the Buffalo City Municipality. Past matric results of the rural schools under consideration were retrieved from the archives of the National Senior Certificate Results to measure the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning and learners' performances. The study concludes that there is a relationship between instructional leadership and learners' outcomes.

KEYWORDS

Buffalo City Municipality

Culture of Teaching and Learning

Eastern Cape

Education Officials

Effective Leadership

Instructional Leadership

National Senior Certificate

Principals

Qualitative Research Methodology

Rural Schools

Learners' performances

Teacher collaboration

Teacher engagement

Theoretical analytical Framework

Transformational Leadership

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The importance of education worldwide cannot be over emphasised. The education system in South Africa is fraught with challenges which include poor management of schools by principals, low motivation on the part of learners, indiscipline, inadequate resources and inadequate teaching infrastructure (Kruger, 2003). These issues, amongst many others, have affected the performance of National Senior Certificate (NSC) Grade 12 learners, especially in rural schools in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. According to Lethoko (cited in Kruger, 2003) the problems of low teacher morale and poor Grade 12 performance have led to a general drive to advance the teaching and learning culture as well as the overall quality of schools in the country. The education sector in South Africa has evolved over the years with formulation and implementation of curriculum reform policies ranging from Curriculum 2005 of 1997 to the Revised National Curriculum Statements (Grades R-9) which was followed by the National Curriculum Statements (NCS, Grades 10-12). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) is the current policy being implemented.

The success of a plethora of policies formulated over the years with a view to improving school performances has, however, been quite doubtful (Jita, 2010). The severity of the problems encountered by the schools in the Eastern Cape and some of the other provinces has nevertheless led to a number of attempts by the education authorities to improve the teaching and learning culture of schools, and these have led to some reforms in the educational sector (Kruger, 2003). These reforms have decentralised the traditionally centralised role played by the Department of Education. Decentralisation entails shifting both educational resources and decision making responsibility away from the Department of Education to schools and communities (Marishane, du Plessis & Botha, 2011). Decentralisation has, in effect, increased the influence of the principal's management role in the success or failure of the school. The role of the principal involves coordination, supervision and control of all teaching and learning activities.

The impact of effective management in any organisation is crucial to the success of that organisation. Management, according to Everard and Morris (1990, cited in UNISA, 2011) is “the process of working with and through individuals and groups and other resources to

accommodate organisational goals''. Effective school management can be linked to how principals utilise their leadership and management acumen within the framework of the school. It is widely recognised that leadership is important for the improvement of academic outcomes. What is scarce nevertheless, is the study of the links between leadership, instruction and learning (Jita, 2010). Research conducted at various times in the United States of America has established instructional leadership as the most effective antecedent in developing the quality of education in schools, and also in improving the learners' pass rates (Fisher & Frey, 2002; Cotton, 2003; Dinham, 2004). Instructional leadership presents the principal as a driving force responsible for curricula and instructional development (Marishane, du Plessis & Botha, 2011). Moreover, other recent research has reiterated that instructional leadership increases learner academic performance (Kearney, 2005; Jenerette & Sherretz, 2007; Gamage, 2009 cited by Ricardo, 2011).

The goal of this research is to ascertain whether instructional leadership can enhance the teaching and learning experiences, and hence lead to improved learner academic performances in the schools under investigation.

1.2 LITERATURE PREVIEW

Education authorities in South Africa as well as schools within their respective districts are made to be answerable to their community to a large extent, with regard to the provision of education (Bowora & Mpofu, 2000). Even though much has changed in the education systems, the public expectations of principals still remains the same. Principals are therefore under immense pressure to meet the increasing demands and expectations in terms of their duties as instructional leaders in building a sound learning and teaching environment in their respective institutions. This, according to some scholars, is in view of the fact that principals in South Africa are saddled with huge burdens in relation to administrative and managerial responsibilities which have shifted their focus from the academic goal.

In light of the above, Hallinger (2003) posits that much of the earlier findings on instructional leadership also had interpretations of principals who had succeeded in bringing a change in their schools. He further stated that these principals were inclined to be greatly directive in their leadership approach, hence motivating the school towards attaining the academic goals. Further, Marshall (cited in Hallinger 2003) states that these instructional leaders have been

described as people who succeeded in overcoming the pressures that had shifted their focus from stimulating a culture of teaching and learning. Donmoyer and Wagstaff (cited in Kruger, 1999) are of the view that the administrative tasks of the principal can no longer be separated from his or her duties as an instructional leader. They further affirmed that principals are better equipped to implement their instructional leadership duties through the managerial responsibilities they fulfil on a daily basis.

The concept of instructional leadership emerged during the 1980s as a result of a series of studies conducted at that time on school effectiveness, change implementation, school improvement and programme improvement (Edmonds, 1979; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston and Smith, 1979; Hall & Hord, 1987; Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Findings based on these studies revealed that the principal's skills as a leader were crucial to school effectiveness and to success in children's learning within the poor urban elementary schools in the United States of America (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger, 2009). Based on the above, some scholars have concluded that principals make a difference in the learner academic outcome through a direct instructional organisation and culture (Kruger, Witziers & Sleepers, 2007).

Instructional leadership therefore, has been defined as "those actions that principals take, or delegate to others, to promote growth in the learner's learning" (Mestry, 1994). These include setting goals for the school, assisting teachers with the curriculum, delivery of instructions, supervision of instructions, and in developing instructions that enhance academic achievement (Blase & Blase, 1998; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Lezotte (cited in Rogers, 2009) sees instructional leadership as leadership that relates to actions and activities that are done to develop a productive work environment and desirable learning environment for learners. Hallinger (2000) explains further that the instructional leader outlines the school's mission, manages the curriculum of the school, and also promotes a conducive environment for learning. Glanz (2006) describes instructional leadership as the encouraging of best practices. Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004), define instructional leadership as "the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning".

Based on the above definition, it may be surmised that instructional leadership encourages the development of a culture of teaching and learning. By functioning in the capacity of an

instructional leader, principals assume the responsibility of making sure that the key elements of education, known as teaching and learning, are in place. These can be seen in the methods employed by principals to ensure that all practical classroom activities are structured towards achieving the school outcomes (Kruger, 2003:206).

In spite of the perceived success of instructional leadership, however, it is not without its critics. Larry Cuban asserts that the managerial role of the principal applies naturally to principalship (Cuban, 1988). According to him, the principal's intention to become an instructional leader is hindered by structural and normative conditions in his work environment. Furthermore, the principal's power of authority is limited because he/she holds a middle management position. Cuban concludes that there are many issues in schools that require the attention of the principal and so most of his/her duties have no relationship with instructional leadership.

Other critics believe that instructional leadership focuses entirely on the principal as the source of expertise, power and authority (Cuban, 1988). Barth (1986) asserts that there is only a small minority of principals who possess this type of instructional leadership and who are capable of transforming school performances. Thus, it is questionable as to whether the majority of principals have the will and expertise to undertake this type of hands-on directive leadership (Barth, 1986, Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; March, 1978 as cited in Hallinger, 2007). Still other researchers suggest that the centralisation of the responsibility undertaken by the principal is too much for one person to bear (Hallinger, 2007:02). Hence, some researchers regard the nature of principalship as one of providing instructional leadership, as an impossible dream (Barth, 1986; Cuban, 1988; March, 1978 as cited in Hallinger, 2007; Southworth, 2002).

These criticisms over the central role the principal performing as the hub of expertise, power and authority, emerged during the school reorganisation in North America in the 1990s; indicating a wider dissatisfaction in regard to instructional leadership. This prompted scholars to explore other leadership models. As a result instructional leadership has been stretched to include models which emphasise distributed and shared empowerment among teachers, for example, distributed leadership, shared leadership and transformational leadership (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). Distributed leadership dwells on the importance of the activity of school leadership rather than on the principal as a unit of analysis (Spillane, Diamond & Jita, 2003). According to Spillane et al. (2003), "Our central argument is this: school leadership is best understood as a distributed practice, *stretched over* the school's social and situational

contexts. It is not simply a function of what a school principal, or any other individual leader – assistant principal, teacher leader – does”. These scholars have argued that the success of a school hinges on the concerted effort of multiple leadership practices. This includes the practice of those multiple individuals in a school who work at mustering and managing school staff in the instructional innovation process (Spillane et al., 2003).

However, before these models were popularised, there were other leadership models that had emerged in previous years, such as situational leadership, trait theories, and contingency theory (Boyan, 1988). These leadership models focused only on school administration, however (Boyan, 1988). Their inadequacies aided the emergence of the new conceptual models in educational leadership, most prominent amongst which were instructional leadership and transformational leadership, which sought to explain how leaders improve school conditions and learner outcomes (see Bass, 1985; 1997; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000b; Silins & Mulford, 2002 as cited in Hallinger, 2003).

Empirical findings on instructional leadership have concluded that where effects have been identified, it has generally been at the elementary school level, and could possibly be a function of school size (Braughton & Riley, 1991; Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990; cited in Hallinger, 2003). Hallinger and Heck (1996a; 1996b) noted that relatively few studies have shown any connection between the principal’s hands-on supervision of classroom instruction, teacher effectiveness, and learner achievement. It has been noted that the actual role that principals play in mission building is influenced by features of the school context such as socio-economic status and school size (Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

More recent findings, however, have reiterated that instructional leadership increases learner academic performance (Kearney, 2005; Jenerette & Sherretz, 2007; Gamage, 2009 cited in Ricardo, 2011).

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research adopts the transformational leadership theory of leader effectiveness for the purpose of undertaking theoretical analytical framework. Transformational leadership evolved through James McGregor Burns in 1978 and was later broadened by Bernard Bass.

However, Burns and Bass did not base their work on schools or principals, but rather on political leaders, army officers and business executives.

Leithwood (1992) stipulates that the goals of transformational leadership include helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture, fostering teacher development, and helping teachers solve problems more effectively. Sergiovanni (1990) affirms that learner performance can be effectively improved by transformational leadership. Further, Sagor (1992) established that high performing schools with a culture of teacher and learner engagement had transformational leaders as their principals.

Transformational leadership could be applied in the Eastern Cape schools where performance has been compromised due to perceived poor leadership by principals. Kruger (2003) identified poor school management by principals amongst other problems such as poor discipline, poor resources and infrastructure as the reasons behind poor school performance. Instructional leadership could be critical in the pursuit of academic achievement. It is recommended therefore, that Eastern Cape schools should engage in effective leadership training, through the use of the instructional leadership model, which is capable of transforming learner-teacher engagement and school performance.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is a relationship between the principal's leadership skills and the school overall performance (Kruger, Witziers & Sleepers, 2007). However, poor school performance has become a recurrent phenomenon in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. Significantly, this perceived failure is attributed, amongst other things, to the leadership style of principals in the rural schools of the Eastern Cape.

1.4.1 Research question

The goal of every educational institution is to provide a conducive atmosphere which fosters academic excellence. The attainment of this goal requires extensive planning and development of instructions necessary for increasing academic performance in the school. A high performing school is an effective school that encourages the development of a positive learning and teaching culture and it is believed that the principal contributes significantly to the success

of any given school (Larner, 2004). In light of the above it may seem that the principal's instructional leadership activity influences the teaching and learning culture. That been said, the following may be stated as the research question:

What is the impact of the principal's instructional leadership role on the culture of teaching and learning in rural schools of the Eastern Cape?

To answer the above question the following sub-questions will be examined by the researcher:

- What is the relationship between instructional leadership and learner performance?
- What is the impact of instructional leadership on teacher activities, staff training and teaching and learning?

1.4.2 Research objectives

To examine the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning in the ten rural secondary schools in the Eastern Cape under consideration, the research objectives are:

- to determine whether instructional leadership has improved the academic performance of the schools, and
- to determine whether instructional leadership improves teacher engagement, staff development and teaching and learning culture.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The research arose out of the need for an effective educational leadership model capable of fostering teaching and learning culture with a view to improving the general performance of learners in the Grade 12 examinations in rural schools of the Eastern Cape. The many changes in the South African education system have led to a general drive to boost school activities (Kruger, 2003), and the advancement of a positive educational culture begins with effective leadership and principals are the vehicles of change in schools. Kruger (2003) asserts that principals ought to be instructional leaders with a vibrant and motivating leadership objectives

centred on increasing the schools' teaching and learning practices. Kruger (2003) further avows that the onus rest with the principal to guarantee effective teaching and learning practices in their respective schools: this implies a responsibility on the part of the principal to ensure that everything possible is done in the effort to improve the culture of teaching and learning, thereby creating an effective school.

Hence the significance of this study is that it will attempt to address the issue of low pass rates in the Grade 12 examinations and to improve the culture of teaching and learning in rural schools of the Eastern Cape. This research therefore suggests that the adoption and development of an instructional leadership model should be advocated in rural schools, and that it should be a condition for the selection of teachers applying for positions of leadership in high schools and also to enlarge the body of knowledge on issues relating to school leadership positions in South Africa.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or conditions or circumstances that go beyond the reasonable control of the researcher which places constraints upon or hinders the accomplishment of the study and/or the interpretation and validity of the findings (Price & Murnan, 2004). The following are limitations in this research:

1. Time constraints: juggling one's work and studies may be quite arduous in the pursuit of academic attainment.
2. The study will rely on the availability and cooperation of participants. This could be time consuming due to the nature of the job of the principals, teachers and the busy schedule of senior officials of the Department of Education.
3. Participants could misinterpret questions which could lead to views that are not relevant to the study.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This research study centres on the instructional leadership model and its impact on the culture of teaching and learning. It focuses on instructional leadership as a driver of a positive culture of teaching and learning which promotes high academic performance in schools. This research

study will not be examining the various leadership styles, their characteristics or effectiveness as leadership styles do not form part of the scope of the study. Furthermore, the study will be limited to public schools within the district because it may be difficult to generalise the results to schools outside of the district.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used will be that of qualitative research. This approach is utilised with the intention of providing a holistic understanding of how instructional leadership impacts on the culture of teaching and learning. In order to answer the research questions, data will be obtained from 10 secondary schools in the King William's Town and East London districts of the Eastern Cape, both located in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality area. Sample schools will be selected based on their performances in the Grade 12 examination. This examination is the benchmark upon which all high school performances are based and the Eastern Cape Department of Education is constantly striving towards enhanced teacher efficacy and improved learner achievement.

A qualitative research method will be used to obtain information on the impact of instructional leadership on teacher activities, staff training and teaching and learning. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (1993), qualitative research is a natural investigation that utilises instruments for information gathering that do not interfere with the phenomenon examined and the perception of participants. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research is a type of interpretive inquiry where the researcher tries to make sense of what he sees, hears and understands. The objective is to have a holistic view of the problem or issue under investigation. The qualitative research method is suitable when the researcher's aim is to have a clear perception of human phenomena while also being able to explore the meaning that are given to events experienced by people (Hoberg, 1999). Examples of qualitative research modes include the Grounded Theory studies (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1994) and the Ethnographic method (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994).

The methodology will also describe the research design, population, sampling and data collection. A descriptive case study will also be used. This descriptive study will be founded on the theoretical framework of effective leadership theories that is suitable for the educational environment of the Eastern Cape region of South Africa.

Furthermore, the researcher will make use of literary reviews, interviews and a study of documents. With regard to questionnaires and interviews, the researcher will engage all focus groups to collect information. This is appropriate because, through close contact with the research field (that is, the schools under investigation) and the senior officials of education in the province for an extended period of time, the researcher will develop an in-depth understanding and will be able to formulate a theoretical analytical framework explaining the phenomenon under examination. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993) an interview is essentially a vocal questionnaire and it basically involves the same steps used in constructing a questionnaire.

1.8.1 Research approach

Interviews and the previous Grade 12 results, retrieved from the archives of the National Senior Certificate records will be the relevant instruments used in this study. Structured interviews will be conducted with participants. There will be face-to-face interviews in order for the interviewer to be able to fully gauge and interpret responses. The interviews will be conducted with participants categorised as teachers/educators and heads of the various schools under consideration. The school results obtained from the archives will be used to establish learners' performance in the various schools investigated. Records of results will be drawn for a period of five years.

Data obtained from the interviews will be collected and analysed. Information will also be collected from multiple sources, following Creswell's (2007) suggestion that it is essential to collect a plethora of data for analysis. Data sorting and pattern matching will be employed to analyse data.

To determine the impact of instructional leadership on teacher activities, staff training, and teaching and learning, interviews will be conducted with certain senior education officials in the province of the Eastern Cape. Information obtained from this will be carefully sorted and analysed.

1.8.2 Research design and methods

The research design is defined as “a plan, blueprint or guide for data collection and interpretation” (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985). The research design is the strategy that is chosen by the researcher to examine the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning in a manner that is clear and logical in order to effectively address the research problem. According to Sekaran (2003), this entails deciding on various issues that border on data collection and analysis which answers the research problem.

To examine the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning, the researcher will utilise a qualitative case study. For the subject of this case study, the researcher will focus on five rural secondary schools in the province of the Eastern Cape that have performed successfully in the past Grade 12 examinations for the past five years, and also on five other rural secondary schools within the same province, but which have achieved a low Grade 12 performance within the same five years. The study will focus on how school leaders enable teachers to improve learner performance within the school using instructional leadership as a framework for the culture of teaching and learning. In this study, performing schools, i.e. those with a 60% or above pass rate in the past Grade 12 examination in the Eastern Cape, will be compared with under performing schools whose pass rates are lower than 60%.

Once the schools that meet these criteria have been identified, the researcher will interview teachers of both category of schools about instructional leadership. Spillane et al. (2003) posit that “instruction is a vast, complex, and multi-dimensional practice including the questions teachers pose for learners, the materials teachers use, the ways learners interact with each other and the teacher, and classroom management”. Therefore, interviews will be conducted with teachers to determine whether instructional leadership is being displayed and how it impacts on learner performance.

Interviews will also be conducted with the principals of these selected schools as well as with certain senior officials from the Department of Education, for example, District Directors and Circuit Managers, who will be interviewed in order to obtain a holistic understanding of the impact of instructional leadership and its impact on teaching and learning culture in the province.

1.8.2.1 Target population and sampling

For this research the research population comprises 55 participants, made up of 40 teachers and 10 principals from the schools under consideration.

The other 5 participants who will be interviewed include senior officials from the Eastern Cape Department of Education, such as District Directors, Chief Education Specialists, and Circuit Managers in charge of district circuits.

1.8.2.2 Data collection and instruments

There are three common ways of collecting data: according to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) these include observation, interviews and questionnaires. For the purpose of this research, interviews will be the instruments to be utilised in the collection of data for analysis. Data from the Grade 12 results will also be analysed in this study. Interviews will be conducted with teachers and principals of the ten secondary schools under investigation, as well as with senior officials of the Eastern Cape Department of Education.

As mentioned, the instruments of measurement to be used for this research will be interviews, similar to the interviews conducted by Reitzug (1989) in his research on teachers in effective schools.

1.8.2.3 Data analysis

Interviews will be conducted to investigate the instructional leadership behaviour of the principals of ten secondary schools under consideration on issues concerning teacher engagement, staff development, the culture of teaching and learning, and learner academic performance. Learners' Grade 12 results will be used to analyse performances of the rural schools under consideration.

1.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The research instrument that will be used in this research is deemed to be reliable. It has been

utilised successfully by Reitzug (1989) in establishing the culture centred on a sense of family through interviews of teachers in effective schools. It was also reliably used in research that concluded that the esprit and confidence of teachers developed as a result of their principals' behaviour. Praise and support were factors responsible for learner academic performance (White & Stevens 1988).

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For this research, the following procedures will be adopted to ensure that all activities will be carried out with due consideration for the required standard of ethical behaviour:

1. Permission to conduct interviews in the schools under study will be obtained from the appropriate authority and from the participating principals.
2. The researcher will respect the necessity to ensure that the schools concerned are not identified and all information about the members of staff, including their identities, will remain strictly confidential.
3. The researcher will observe the rights of authors cited in the study.
4. All other confidential materials divulged to the researcher will remain confidential.
5. The researcher will endeavour to report the findings of the investigation with fairness and accuracy.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

It is recommended that for the sake of clarity and also to avoid misconceptions regarding terminology, models or theories be defined and simplified (Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, 2002). In this study, the following definitions have been provided for concepts in the context they have been used.

Culture of teaching and learning

Heick (2014) gave the meaning of culture of learning as “a collection of thinking habits, beliefs about self, and collaborative workflows that result in sustained critical learning”. Smith and Schalekamp (1997, cited in Calitz, Fuglestad & Lillejord, 2002: 239), gave a definition of the concept “culture of teaching and learning” as “the attitude of teachers and learners towards

teaching and learning, the spirit of dedication and commitment in a school which arises through the joint effect of school management, the input of teachers, the personal characteristics of learners, factors in the family life of learners, school-related and social factors”. The school culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs that frames the school.

Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership has been define as “the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning” (Spillane et al. 2004). Instructional leadership has also been defined as “those actions that principals take, or delegate to others, to promote growth in the learner’s learning” (Mestry, 1994).

Leader

A leader is a person who leads or commands a group or an organisation or a country. A leader is an individual who is able to influence other people to achieve certain goals regardless of their positions (Robbins, 1996).

Leadership

Leadership is the action of leading individuals or an organisation. It has been defined as the process of influencing a set of individuals to achieve a shared goal or purpose (Northouse, 2013).

Transformational leadership

The concept of transformational leadership was first developed by Burns (1978). According to Burns, transformational leaders ensure that followers are consciously aware of the importance of sharing organisational goals and values. Burns states that it is a leadership approach that causes change in the individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders.

School effectiveness

Several definitions of school effectiveness have been provided by various scholars and prominent amongst these scholars is Sergiovanni (2001) who posits that school effectiveness involves accomplishing higher levels of academic understanding, and creating relationships that is characterised by care and respect.

School effectiveness has also been defined as, “a school is said to be effective if it is doing right things in a right way and strives to achieve its objectives using its resources optimally, economically, efficiently and sufficiently” Ignathios (2003).

School climate

School climate has been defined as “a relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by teachers, influences their behaviour, and is based on their collective perceptions” DiPaola and Hoy (2008:43).

School curriculum

The term curriculum refers to the components or scope of a specific subject or programme. In a study conducted by Reys, Reys, Lapan, Holliday and Wasman in 2003, they referred to curriculum as a set of educational objectives expressed across grades that highlight the anticipated mathematics content and develop goals at specific periods throughout the school programme (Rey, Rey, Lapan, Holliday & Wasman: 2003).

1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The study is organised into six chapters. Each chapter deals with a specific aspect of the study. A brief description of each chapter is provided below.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 presents the general orientation of the study. It provides the reader with an overview

of the intended research, the background of the research, the problem statement, the significance of the research, the explanation of the research methods, and clarification of the key concepts used in the study.

Chapter 2

This chapter contains of a review of literature bordering on the investigation undertaken by the research. It will analyse the theory of transformational leadership utilised in the theoretical framework.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 focuses on research methodology, research design and data collection. In this chapter the design and conducting of the empirical study are discussed. The chapter also presents the research trustworthiness, credibility and the ethical nature of the study.

Chapter 4

All data collected during the investigations are presented and analysed in this chapter, in an attempt to address the research problem. Information collected during the interviews as well as information retrieved from the archives are analysed in this chapter.

Chapter 5

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the data gathered as well as the results of the study.

Chapter 6

Recommendations with regard to the research problem will be provided and the conclusions drawn by the study will be highlighted in Chapter 6.

1.13 SUMMARY

The background to the proposed study has been outlined in this first chapter, and the stage has been set for an investigation. The problem statement, the research questions and objectives have been provided. The chapter also presents the significance of the research and limitations. Key terminologies have been explained, and the research methodology and design to be used are briefly described. This chapter finally provides a summary of the structure of the research, with brief summaries of the content of each chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two provided a review of literature on the impact of principals' instructional leadership activities on teaching and learning. The focus of the review was to present an array of literature on instructional leadership and academic outcomes. In other words, the purpose of this literature review was to examine how the principal's instructional leadership activities influence school outcomes. In the course of this review, the researcher emphasised the responsibility of the principal in facilitating the pedagogical objectives of the school as well as the impact of leadership role on learner performance and teacher development, and to ascertain whether this role is directly or indirectly linked to school outcomes. The researcher also highlighted the views of other scholars who may be more sceptical of the emphasis placed on principals as the main driver of school instructional outcomes, and also the views of others who opined that current studies have broadened the focus of instructional leadership to include a more distributed leadership. In the theoretical framework of this study, transformational leadership theory has been applied to the principal's instructional leadership role in rural schools and empirical findings. Arguably, these two leadership approaches overlap in the effect they have on pedagogical outcomes. This chapter also provided a brief account of leadership and educational leadership, and the variety of interpretations that have been proffered. The researcher then drew the chapter to a close by giving a brief narrative on underperforming rural schools in the Eastern Cape.

2.2 LEADERSHIP

The aim of every organisation is to attain its goals. The accomplishment of organisational goals hinges on the leadership of the organisation. This notion is also applicable to education leadership. Studies have shown that school leadership is central to the attainment of the educational goals of the school (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010). Empirical findings have revealed that there is a link between school leadership and learner achievement (Louis et al., 2010; Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016).

Leadership has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Most interpretations of leadership are associated with ‘providing direction’ and ‘exercising influence’ (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Yukl (2002) defines leadership as a “Social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person (or group) over the other people (or groups) to structure activities and relationships in a group or organization”. Riggio and Murphy (2003) interpret leadership as a manner in which one person influences other individuals to achieve set objectives and direct the affairs of the organisation in such a way that it becomes cohesive and coherent. According to Northouse (2013), leadership is a way of influencing a group of individuals to achieve a set objective or purpose. These interpretations of leadership portray a phenomenon where an individual (or group) has the ability to influence others or to direct a team towards the accomplishment of organisational aims. The essential aspect of this research is linked to the basic functions of leadership as it relates to influencing and guiding teaching and learning towards increasing the learner’s educational outcomes.

2.3 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

In light of the above, education leadership may be characterised by an individual (the principal) purposefully wielding a level of influence over others (teachers and learners) in order to accomplish the school’s objectives. In a further elaboration, the principal is seen as the school leader who sets the tone for the teachers and creates an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning, where learners are motivated to reach their full potential (Sergiovanni 2001). Based on an extensive research exercise carried out over three decades ago, recognition has been given to the leadership role of the principal in determining the school climate and governance (Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1990). A key practice that is significant to effective school leadership is the principal’s ability to create a good instructional climate for teaching and learning with a view to achieving academic success (The Wallace Foundation, 2012). Literature has reinforced the view, amongst others, that the principal’s high expectation for all “is key to closing the achievement gap between advantaged and less advantaged learners and for raising the overall achievement of all learners” (Porter, Murphy, Golding, Elliot, Polikoff & May, 2008). This view was further elaborated by Porter et al, (2008) stating that one needs to “[P]ick the right school leader and great teachers will come and stay. Pick the wrong one and, over time, good teachers leave, mediocre ones stay, and the school gradually (or not so gradually) declines”. This statement gives credence to the importance of instructional leadership as a very important model in facilitating academic activities.

2.4 CONCEPTUALISATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The theory of instructional leadership began during the 1980s as a result of a series of studies conducted on school effectiveness, change implementation, school improvement and programme improvement (Edmonds, 1979; Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Hall & Hord, 1987; Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). These studies were an extension of some of the first research conducted by Brookover *et al.* (1979). The findings of the studies presented the argument that the principal's skill as a leader was essential to both school effectiveness and the success in children's learning within the poor urban elementary schools in the United States of America (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger, 2009). Some scholars also have argued that principals make a difference in the learner educational outcome through a direct instructional organisation and culture (Kruger, Witziers & Sleepers, 2007). Still others (Bush, 2008; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006) have submitted that school principals are fundamental to developing and maintaining successful, effective schools and education structures (Bush, 2008; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006 cited in Naidoo & Naidoo, 2015).

The principal's instructional leadership responsibility is to guarantee effective teaching and learning at all times (Kruger, 2003). According to Kruger "a school with an established teaching and learning culture will also have a well-developed organisational structure and instructional programme that focuses on all aspects of academic achievement and the professional development of educators" (Kruger, 2003). Further, Kruger maintains that "instructional leadership occurs when the principal provides direction, resources and support to both educators and learners with the aim of improving teaching and learning at a school" (Kruger, 2003).

Instructional leadership therefore, has been defined by DeMatthews (2014) as: "the leadership functions associated with teaching and learning, more specifically the duties and responsibilities principals need to perform each day to support teachers and learners towards educational excellence. In order to accomplish this, principals must create a safe, supportive and collaborative work environment". From this definition we can clearly reason that the key obligation of an instructional leader includes the facilitating of learning and teaching for the purpose of increasing the educational outcomes. He/she primarily guides teaching for learning

and assists teachers and learners in their work towards academic excellence (DeMatthews, 2014). Mestry (1994) interprets instructional leadership as “those actions that principals take, or delegate to others, to promote growth in the learner’s learning”. This interpretation aligns with the definition given by DeMatthews (2014) to the extent that the actions taken by the principal are geared towards educational excellence. Other scholars have believed that the basic activities of the principal as instructional leader include setting goals for the school, assisting teachers with the curriculum, delivery of instructions, and supervision of instructions as well as the development of instruction that enhances academic achievement (Blase & Blase, 1998; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Lezotte (cited in Rogers, 2009) sees instructional leadership as leadership that relates to actions and activities that are done to develop a productive work environment and desirable learning environment for learners.

It has been argued that the fundamental goals of schools are teaching and learning (Naidoo & Naidoo, 2015), while other activities are secondary to these essential objectives (Hoy & Hoy, 2003). The responsibility of classroom learning therefore falls on principals who guarantee that the instructional programme of the school is well managed. That is, they lead and direct the delivery of the curriculum with a view to influencing learner outcomes (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Mark and Printy (2003) provide a broad definition of instructional leadership when they define instructional leadership as a leadership function related to teaching instruction and learner learning. Leithwood (1994) however, states concisely that instructional leadership comprises only of the traits that impact on the learning programme, teaching guidelines, supervision, and teacher development. As gleaned from the above definitions, some basic attributes of instructional leadership that cut across all the definitions were highlighted by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) as “defining the school mission, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive school climate” (see table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Tenets of Instructional Leadership

Defines the Mission	Manages Instructional Programme	Promotes School Climate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framing school goals • Communicating school goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervising and evaluating instruction • Coordinating curriculum • Monitoring learner progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting instructional time • Promoting professional development • Maintaining high visibility • Providing incentives for teachers • Enforcing academic standards • Providing incentives for learners

Adapted: Framework of Instructional Management (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985)

In the light of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership dimensions, the tenets of instructional leadership can be perceived to include: professional development of teachers; monitoring learner performance; fostering teacher collaboration, and promoting a culture of teaching and learning.

Having touched on several definitions of instructional leadership, the core issue here was to determine whether there is a link between the principal's leadership and learner attainment. According to studies conducted by a number of renowned scholars, findings have revealed that there is a connection between the leadership of the principal and learner achievement (Andrews, Soder & Jacoby, 1986; Ebert & Stone, 1988; Heck et al., 1990). Brookover et al. (1982) identified five factors that stimulate higher learner achievement as follows:

1. School climate conducive to learning
2. Basic skills instruction
3. Teachers' high expectation of learners' achievement

4. Instructional objectives for monitoring and assessing learner performance
5. A principal instructional leader

In light of the above, it is also practical to ascertain the existence of any possible connection between instructional leadership and learner outcomes. The review of literature shows that a number of studies have been carried out to investigate the link between instructional leadership and school outcomes. Researchers in the United States analysed data from the Tennessee School Improvement Project to ascertain a connection between principal leadership and student learning (Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger, Bickman & Davis, 1990). Their investigations reveal that there is an indirect impact of the principal instructional leadership on student learning. They state that, by directly influencing the instructional school climate and instructional organisation, the principal indirectly impacted on student learning. Further, an analysis of empirical studies by Hallinger (2010) on school leadership concluded that leaders can have indirect impacts on learner outcome by enhancing a collaborative school learning culture, through the development of the leadership skills of the workers and the community.

Further findings have also identified a connection between learner achievement and the principal's instructional leadership role. A research conducted by Azume and Madhere (1983) concludes that principals can achieve organisation coordination and control through the adaptation of feedback and socialization which could ultimately influence learner achievement. A further study conducted by Ebert and Stone (1998) also states that principal behaviour and attributes have a significant impact on learner achievement. Conclusions drawn from interview data from two schools in Florida in United States of America show that the principals of more effective schools had high instructional expectations and facilitated teacher development (Reitzug, 1989).

Blasé and Blasé (1999) expanded the investigation on the direct impact the principal's leadership has on teachers and classroom instructions. However, research has concluded that the relationships among instructional leadership, teaching, and even learner achievement had not been adequately studied (Leithwood et al., 1990). Their study revealed, amongst other things, a causal relationship between principals' instructional leadership and teacher development in view of the strategies that were highlighted in their study. Furthermore, Heck et al. (1990) maintains that: "Our data, however, provide empirical support for the theory that

principal instructional leadership is directly related to the school's performance at a higher or lower academic level. Thus, the principal must now be considered as one 'school effects' variable that directly influences learner achievement".

Their theoretical causal (school climate, school instructional organisation and governance) models credibly reveal a connection between principal leadership and learner achievement. In other words, literature seems to make it clear that these key variables of principals' leadership (school instructional organisation, school climate and school governance) have a direct impact on learner achievement.

2.5 STUDIES THAT ARE SCEPTICAL OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Notwithstanding findings associated with the instructional leadership model, some criticisms of the model have emerged. According to Hallinger (2007), the emergence of instructional leadership in the 1980s as the predominant model attracted some criticisms from scholars who questioned the capacity of the principal to function as an instructional leader. Jita and Mokhele (2013) report that various studies have tried to explain what it is that principals who are instructional leaders do that other principals do not do, and how their actions are linked to the improvement of teachers' activities in classroom and learner performance. Sceptics claim that the demands on the principal are such that a greater part of their activities may have no connection with instructional leadership (Cuban, 1988 as cited in Hallinger, 2007). Others feel that the majority of principals may not possess the skills necessary to function as instructional leaders (Bart, 1986; Bossert et al., 1992; March, 1978 as cited in Hallinger, 2007).

The principal as an instructional leader must possess the necessary skills to function in that capacity. Bush (2003) maintains that "without the necessary skills, many principals are overwhelmed by the task" of trying to function as instructional leaders. Naidoo and Naidoo (2015) reiterate this view when they state that school principals who are well trained in "managerial models, very often struggle to acquire the knowledge and skills that they need to execute their functions as school heads and leaders of curriculum delivery" (Naidoo and Naidoo, 2015). Others argue that because instructional leadership was initially designed for smaller elementary schools, its applicability to secondary schools remains uncertain (Leithwood, 1994). This uncertainty is due largely to the fact that the size and intricacies of secondary schools could hamper direct teacher supervision by the principals as instructional

leaders. That is, the principal may fail to effectively manage the curriculum delivery, unless he/she becomes a subject matter expert in nearly every discipline.

It is instructive to note that the concept of instructional leadership has been used for quite some time to describe the achievements of instructional programmes in relation to leadership at school level (Jita, 2010). This conceptualisation of instructional leadership sees the principal as an instructional leader without taking into consideration the contributions of teachers and other members of the community (Robinson et al., 2008; Ylimaki, 2007). Studies on instructional leadership have focused on the principal as a unit of analysis and these studies have shaped much of the thinking that the behaviours and/or actions of principals contribute to the instructional improvements within the school. Spillane et al. (2003) are of the view that leadership literature has contributed to the general thinking that the ‘principal’ is an alternative word for school leadership. They further argue that a better comprehension of school leadership entails understanding the relations among the leading practices as opposed to simply understanding only the practices of each of those who lead.

According to Jita and Mokhele (2013), the interpretation of the principal as the chief instructional leader in a school has faced some criticisms, and that current studies have broadened the focus of instructional leadership to include the contributions of other staff. Therefore, Jita and Mokhele (2013) have expanded on the concept of instructional leadership by adopting Spillane’s idea of distributed leadership. Jita and Mokhele (2013) aver that an earlier study by Spillane et al. (2003), as well as a more recent work by Lee, Hallinger and Walker (2012), offer examples of various contributions by ‘other leaders’ to the instructional improvement of the school.

2.5.1 Distributed and Transformational leadership

Spillane et al (2001) give the definition of distributed leadership as “the collective properties of the group of leaders working together to enact a particular task, leading to the evolution of a leadership practice that is potentially more than the sum of each individual’s practice”. Spillane et al. (2004) are of the view that school leadership should be perceived from the angle of multiple players performing related or unrelated tasks directed at achieving the instructional improvement or a common goal in a particular context. In a paper titled *Leading Instruction: The distribution of leadership for instruction*, Spillane et al. (2003) argue for a re-

conceptualisation of instructional leadership by articulating a distributed perspective on leadership. They state that “[o]ur central argument is this: school leadership is better understood as a distributed practice, *stretched over* the school’s social and situational contexts. It is not simply a function of what a school principal, or any other individual leader – assistant principal, teacher leader – does”. They argue for a distributed perspective on leadership, claiming that this leadership framework imbibes the practices of those multiple individuals in a school who manage the school staff in the instructional innovation process as opposed to seeing leadership in terms of individuals (Spillane et al., 2003).

In a further elaboration of the concept of school leadership, Spillane et al. (2003) describe it as “the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning”. Notable in this definition is the element of teaching resources. These scholars contend that the tools and material artefacts are mutually inclusive of leading instruction and that there are only limited studies of school leadership with a focus on tools and material artefacts. They assert that a brief investigation of the work of leadership reveals various tools such as teacher observation protocols and curricular framework, amongst other things, which they believe are consistent with the work of school leaders. They say that these tools are not aids used to execute the tasks performed by instructional leaders, but rather that they essentially influence the leadership task, how the tasks are approached, and how individuals set about executing them. Basically, these scholars have argued that multiple individuals and material artefacts must be considered when documenting leadership in elementary schools (Spillane et al., 2003). More recent studies have confirmed the effect of teacher quality on the learner outcome (Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Dhuey & Smith, 2014).

This criticisms about the central role of the principal as the hub of expertise, power and authority emerged during the school reorganisation in North America in the 1990s; indicating a wider dissatisfaction with instructional leadership. This prompted scholars to explore other leadership models. Consequently, instructional leadership has been widened to include more distributed models which emphasise distributed and shared empowerment among teachers, such as distributed leadership, shared leadership and transformational leadership, for example (Spillane et al., 2004).

According to Göksoy (2015), distributed leadership is an outcome of reflecting the perception

on organisational management concerning the opinion that the roles and positions of leadership should be shared. In other words, distributed leadership focuses on human resources in its entirety in organisations, particularly the academic staff in schools as leaders. Based on this leadership model, according to him, it is essential to foster leadership potentials of the schools' workforce in order to afford equal opportunity to all workers to achieve the goals of the school. Therefore distributed leadership fundamentally involves the concept of shared ideas and common sense by creating collaboration among school staff that increases the organisational efficiency, effectiveness and productivity which ensures the achievement of organizational goals. Göksoy (2015) further opined that the arduous task of school management cannot be entrusted to only one leader. Bolden (2011), in a paper titled "Distributed Leadership in Organizations", stated that the concept of distributed leadership bears many similarities to the concepts of shared, collective, collaborative, emergent and co- leadership.

Distributed leadership throws more weight on the concerted effort of the school leadership rather than on the principal as a unit of analysis (Spillane et al., 2003). Spillane et al. (2003) argue furthermore that the success of a school hinges on the concerted effort of multiple leadership practices. As mentioned earlier, distributed leadership includes the practice of those many individuals in a school who work at mustering and managing school staff in the instructional innovation process (Spillane et al., 2003). The notion of distributed leadership correlates with another conceptualisation of leadership, which researchers have termed shared instructional leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003; Ylimaki, 2007). It also correlates with a notable finding of a study conducted by Louis et al. (2010) which reveals that effective leadership administered by a combination of principal, teachers, administrative staff and others is linked with increased learner performance on maths and reading tests. They further suggest that what is applicable in relation to leadership, is the popular axiom of two (or more) heads being better than one. Tsakeni and Jita (2017), from a distributed perspective, also argued on the role of follower as co-constructors of school leadership processes. They opined that most theories on leadership are fixated on the success of leaders, paying little or no attention to the role of the follower. The finding of their study highlighted the fundamental role of followers working in partnership with positional leaders to co-construct leadership processes. In other word, stating that teacher participation in co-constructing and sustain leadership practices for school improvement is crucial.

In the midst of these opposing views, there is an increasing body of evidence suggesting that

both school culture and leadership influence learner achievement. Hallinger states that an extensive study of the literature reveals that there is obviously more emphasis on instructional leadership in the profession than there was two decades ago (Hallinger, 2001, 2003; Southworth, 2002 cited in Hallinger, 2007).

Against this background, it is crucial at this stage to examine whether there is a relationship between instructional leadership and learner performance in rural schools of the Eastern Cape. Arguably, instructional leadership can lead to increased learner performance. According to Naidoo and Naidoo (2015) recent studies in South Africa have shown that learner achievement is closely linked to the type of schools the learners attend. They state that the studies reveal that high achieving learners are associated with schools that are effectively managed, where more instructional leadership is provided by principals. In other words, high performing schools are characterised by effective instructional practices or strong leadership. Consequently, it is pertinent to examine whether instructional leadership has an impact on teaching and learning. Arguably, the instructional practices of the principal create an impact on classroom activity. When functioning as an instructional leader, the principal assumes the responsibility of making sure that the school curriculum is fully implemented. This is evident in the existence of fundamental activities such as teaching, learning including all the approaches principal adopt to stimulate classroom effectiveness (Kruger, 2003). These activities of principals impact on the school culture (Sheppard, 1996) which includes basic classroom activities (Kruger, 2003).

Other leadership models have emerged in previous years, such as the situational leadership model, trait theories, and the contingency theory (Boyan, 1988). However these leadership models only focused on school administration (Boyan, 1988). Their inadequacies aided the emergence of the new conceptual models in educational leadership, most prominent of which are instructional leadership and transformational leadership, which seek to explain how effective leaders improve school conditions and learner outcomes (see Bass, 1985, 1997; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000b; Silins & Mulford, 2002 as cited in Hallinger, 2003).

The concept of transformational leadership was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns (1978) in his research on political leaders. According to him, transformational leadership is a process in which “leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation”. His description of this type of leadership approach is one that clearly redefines the values and transforms the expectations and aspirations of teachers.

Yukl (1989) defines transformational leadership as involving a series of actions which improves the overall outlook and presumptions of colleagues and which increase loyalty to the accomplishment of the organisational goals and mission. Bass and Avolio (1994) believe that this action enables the followers to develop the ability to solve problems in the future without the knowledge of the leader. According to Northouse (2010), transformational leadership wields some level of influence on its followers to the extent that more is achieved than what is expected of them. Transformational leadership is renowned for its positive impact on the scope of a positive school culture (Sahin, 2004). This style of leadership produces an outcome that describes the management culture of the organisation. It demonstrates a leadership style that motivates the subordinates and assists them to fully grasp the purpose and mission of the group to enable them to be selfless and strive for the collective interest of the group (Bass, 1999). Significantly, this is a broader area, which encapsulates the teaching and learning culture. Transformational leadership motivates and educates the followers to be innovative and creative, to take initiative and make decisions without the intervention of the superior (Bass, 1999). Thus, learning is enhanced when teachers and other subordinate staff are allowed by the transformational leader to use their initiative to achieve organisational goals. This gives the subordinates a feeling of partnership, responsibility and self-efficacy (Barnett, Craven & Marsh, 2005). Consequently, teaching and learning is advanced beyond expectation through the increased confidence imposed on the teachers, administrative staff and learners, in addition to support provided for personal development.

In light of the above, Transformational leadership appeals to the higher ideals and ethical stance of subordinates, increasing their expectations and inspirations for more effort and performance for the organisation (Bass 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990). Hence, the relationship between the transformational leaders and his/her subordinates can be described in terms of mutual respect and pride (Bass & Avolio 1990). This mutual respect has a positive bearing on the teaching and learning culture as it is fundamentally based on an ethical stance that has four components, described by Bass and Riggio (2006) as comprising the following:

1. Idealising influence
2. Inspirational motivation
3. Intellectual stimulation
4. Individualised consideration.

Against this background, Shafritz and Russell (2003) assert that transformational leadership changes the culture of an organisation by injecting a new vision into the organisation. Having reviewed the literature that elaborates on distributed and transformational leadership styles in line with instructional leadership theory, Barnett, Craven and Marsh (2005) however warn that distributive or transformational leadership styles should be utilised within an educational system restrictively and should be carefully accompanied by the more traditional hierarchical leadership. They propose that teachers react more positively to the principal's personalised attention than to a transformational style of leadership (Barnette, Craven & Marsh, 2005). In other words, the teachers' preference of leadership style is the transactional style of leadership. Understandably, Barnette et al. (2005) are suggesting that the implementation of the distributive or transformational leadership approach should be done in conjunction with the transactional leadership approach. This view reiterates the opinion of some researchers that transformational leadership is "an extension of transactional leadership" (Pruijn & Boucher, 1994; Bass, 1985).

Burns (1978) also came up with the concept of transactional leadership, but argued that the transformational approach is remarkable in terms of creating changes in both individuals and organisations. Burns (1978) further argues that the transformational, unlike the transactional, leadership approach is not built on a bond of "give and take" but is established on the leader's capabilities to effect change through example and the delivery of an inspiring vision and goals. He finally posited that leadership cannot demonstrate both transformational and transactional leadership practices simultaneously, in other words, they are mutually exclusive styles (1978). Burns' view completely counters the theory proposed by Barnette et al. (2005), while Bass (1985) is of the contrary view that both transformational and transactional leadership styles are mutually inclusive.

There is, however, agreement in the literature that ordinary leadership can be differentiated from extra-ordinary leadership (Burns, 1978). In the same vein, the effectiveness of transformational leadership as a better leadership approach is not in doubt. According to Bass and Avolio (1990) "transformational leadership rather than transactional leadership inspires followers to better their performance". The influence of leadership on performance is the core focus of a plethora of studies. Against this backdrop, it may be argued that there is a relationship between transformational leadership and instructional leadership.

2.5.2 Relationship between transformational leadership and instructional leadership

The field of educational leadership has seen the growth of new theoretical models for over two decades. The most prominent amongst these leadership models, however, have been the instructional leadership and transformational leadership models (Hallinger & Heck, 1999). Both models were developed from the studies of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Leithwood, Leonard and Sharratt (1998). Their studies have revealed that there are some similarities, as well as some differences, between the instructional leadership and the transformational leadership models (Hallinger, 2007).

In a study by Shatzer (2009), it is posited that more elements of transformational leadership have been incorporated in recent models of instructional leadership. These elements include: communication of vision; creation of culture of learning; promotion of teacher development; development of personal relationships with both staff and the community; as well as establishing partnership with teachers and the use of exemplary conducts to influence followers. This view aligns with earlier findings by Hallinger and Murphy (1995) where the similarities between some elements of transformational and instructional leadership models were highlighted. According to them, the transformational leader, characterised by vision and shared goals, influences his/her followers to pursue organisational goals rather than personal goals. This phenomenon is similar to that of the instructional leader who understands and communicates the organisational culture of shared goals with the staff. Most striking among the similarities between these two models is their creation of a shared sense of purpose and the maintenance of high visibility in the school (Hallinger, 2007).

In a further elaboration, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) reveal that both transformational leadership and instructional leadership approaches nurture an environment of high expectation, especially as they concern a school culture that is centred on improving teaching and learning. Essentially, the instructional leader concentrates on the provision of incentives for learners and teachers. In other words, incentives are used to motivate both learners and teachers with a view to accomplishing the school's mission and objectives. Similarly, the transformational leader utilises a reward structure to meet similar organisational objectives.

In terms of staff development, the instructional leader focuses on staff training and

development based on the school's set objectives. For the transformational leader, staff growth (personal or professional) is viewed as a broad concept aimed at intellectual stimulation, not necessarily aligned to the school's mission. The major difference, however, is that transformational leaders operate from a bottom-up perspective in comparison to instructional leaders who operate from the top-down perspective (Hallinger, 2007). Perhaps, an adaptation of a combination of instructional leadership and transformational leadership models will have a far greater bearing on teaching and learning. Instructional leadership is notable for producing high performances in teaching and learning while similarly, transformational leadership produces excellent outcomes in organisations (Hardman, 2011). However, a study on instructional leadership has concluded that instructional leadership can have a more prominent impact on learner outcome than transformational leadership, mainly because it throws more weight on the quality of teachers and teaching culture (Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam & Brown, 2014).

Hence, there is a dominance of instructional leadership and transformational leadership models to be found in the literature on educational leadership (Hallinger, 2007). It is pertinent to note that, a focus on the theoretical framework of this study will further provide direction in understanding suitable and relevant theories that give support to this discourse.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In terms of the theoretical framework, the leadership theory upon which this study hinges is the transformational leadership model. Transformational leadership theory evolved through James McGregor Burns in 1978 and was later broadened by Bernard Bass. However, neither Burns nor Bass based their work on schools but rather on political leaders, army officers and business executives.

Leithwood (1992) stipulated that the goals of transformational leadership include aiding staff members to develop team collaborative, professional school culture, fostering teacher development, and helping teachers solve problems more effectively. Sergiovanni (1990) affirms that learner performance can be effectively improved by transformational leadership. Further, Sagor (1992) established that high performing schools with a culture of teacher and learner engagement had transformational leaders as their principals.

The transformational leadership theory posits that there are five elements that describe the behavioural components of transformational leadership. They are: idealised influence (attributes); idealised influence (behaviour); inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration (Bass, 1985). It is pertinent to note that these components of transformational leadership were subsequently reduced to four (Bass and Riggio 2006) namely: idealising influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration.

Idealised influence (attributes) happens when the followers want to be associated with certain leaders whom they copy and whom they trust to have an accomplishable mission and vision. Idealised influence describes the leader's behaviour which attracts followers to be associated with them and also copy them. Followers of leaders characterised by influence or charisma are proud of them and respect them (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990). According to Hayward (2005), employees trust and respect such leaders highly such that they also adopt their vision and try as much as possible to associate with them and in the process develop a strong sense of loyalty to them.

Inspirational motivation means that the leaders behave in a manner that inspires and motivates people by providing meaning and challenge to the activities undertaken by their followers. Avolio, Waldman and Yarmmarino (1991) posit that earlier events such as past personal achievements, the building of communication skills, and emulation of the leader can possibly motivate others. This prospect is partly accomplished by combining both individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation when a leader is emulated. This behaviour also reinforces the leader's inspirational appeal, in that it makes the followers feel cherished, confident and assured about their leader's ability to solve problems and assist the group to engage new challenges and opportunities.

A leader's inspirational motivation is even more fortified if his vision of how to achieve the organisational goals is shared by all the workers. Inspirational leaders are usually exemplary in regard to hard work, optimistic during periods of crisis and creative in devising work methods to reduce the workload of employees. Intellectual simulation happens when leaders support their followers in being innovative and creative by questioning presumptions, revisiting problems and tackling old issues in new ways. Intellectual simulation also happens when the

leader assists the followers to offer other, alternative solutions to problems and challenges.

Individual consideration happens when the leader encourages a one-to-one relationship with his/her followers in order to enhance goals and develop skills. The leader who exhibits individual consideration in regard to each employee as an individual, and who is attentive to the peculiar abilities and concerns of each individual shows the characteristics of transformational leadership (Bass 1985). Thus, transformational leaders listen to and involve others regarding the concerns of individuals, while at the same time assisting the individual to build his/her own self-confidence. Transformational leaders are interested in the growth and development of the needs of the individual. This is achieved by removing obstacles in the system which prevent the followers' development and increased performance. Interestingly, these leaders easily determine and assess the needs of each follower and then they elevate the followers to the greater heights needed for developing each one to achieve his/her best potential. Transformational leaders often coach mentors and counsel their followers. Leaders that have inspirational motivation have a high expectation of their highly motivated followers (Bass 1985). These individuals communicate vital issues easily amongst themselves. They are also characterised by self-determination and dedication to achieve set objectives and present a confident and attainable view of the future.

The implication of this theory is that as the transformational leader influences his followers by motivating and inspiring them to be creative, communicating vital issues, solving problems to enhance performance, the instructional leader can also motivate, coach, mentor and inspire his subordinates to create an atmosphere conducive to enhancing the performance of schools in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape.

Transformational leadership can be applied in the rural schools of the Eastern Cape where performances have been compromised due to perceived poor leadership by principals. Consequently, Kruger (2003) identifies poor school management by principals, amongst other problems such as poor discipline, poor resources and dilapidated infrastructure, as the reasons behind poor school performances. The development of instructional leadership could therefore be crucial in the pursuit of academic excellence. It is recommended therefore, that the Eastern Cape schools engage in developing effective leadership skills such as those offered by the instructional leadership model, which are capable of transforming learner-teacher engagement and school performances.

2.7 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Empirical research finding has concluded that transformational leadership and instructional leadership are the two foremost models (Hallinger, 2007). Empirical research findings have established that transformational leadership leads to organisational success due to improved staff performance (Saifullah, Riaz, Rashid and Salman, 2011). Transformational leadership has also been found to be associated with organisational effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 1994). It was concluded in a study on a South African pharmaceutical organisation that there is a linkage between transformational leadership and employee performance (Hayward, Davidson, Pascal, Tasker, Amos & Pearse, 2003). The research outcomes above give credence to the findings of Leithwood (1992) which conclude that transformational leadership positively impacts on teacher collaboration and performances.

Similarly, instructional leadership has been associated with positive learner achievements which surpass those of other types of leadership (Bush and Glover, 2009). Instructional leadership has also been identified as strong leadership that focuses effectively on curriculum and instruction, and it has been used successfully in teaching children in poor urban communities (Bossert et al., 1982; Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Purkey & Smit, 1983 cited in Hallinger, 2007). Recent findings in South Africa have furthermore concluded that learners' achievement has a relationship with the type of school the learner attends. The more that instructional leadership is utilised by principals, the more the likelihood will be that learners will achieve (Bush, 2007; Grobler 2013; Hardman, 2011).

2.8 UNDERPERFORMING RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

Rural is a broad, nonspecific word that refers to country life and farming (Collins Concise Dictionary, 2004). In other words, it resonates with the idea of distant expanses of land far from cities and towns. In the South African perspective, determining a rural setting can be complicated, because rurality can be described in diverse contexts, ranging from tribal lands under traditional rulers, to sparsely populated agricultural land, areas previously utilised for mining purposes or land settlements created by the former colonial and apartheid government (DBE, 2018).

The Eastern Cape of South Africa has a multiplicity of schools, most of which are located in

sparsely populated farming areas and villages characterised by low quality infrastructure and subsistence economic activities. These schools typically grapple with resource inadequacy and lack of specialist educators, a phenomenon that has lingered since prior to 1994 when the legacy of the homeland system created a segregated educational system that provided mud schools, shack schools and prefabricated schools, particularly in rural areas. The poor educational performances of rural schools has been attributed to the legacy of inequality which remains entrenched in the history of rural schools by the MEC for education in the province, Mandla Makupula (Ngcukana, 2017). Hence the problem of underperformance of rural schools has been a perennial problem in the province.

Underperformance is synonymous with failing schools that have scored a pass rate lower than 60%. School underperformance is defined by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) (2007) as those schools with “high retention rates, those achieving below 60% pass rates in the Senior Certificate Examination and schools that are achieving more than 60% in their overall pass rates, but whose pass rates dropped by more than 10% in the Grade 12 Senior Certificate Examinations”. In relation to the remoteness of the schools and the immediate causes of this problem, it can be argued that school underperformance is hardly one-dimensional (Leithwood et al, 2000). Various reasons have been advanced for it, prominent among which are the dearth of resources and teaching staff especially in the rural schools. Though the situation persists, the Eastern Cape Department of Education has enacted various policies that address inequality and resource shortages, in an effort at finding a lasting solution. One such rural education draft document was released in 2017, with the aim of improving access and quality of education for rural dwellers (Department of Basic Education, 2018).

A prominent issue not covered by the draft document is the principal’s leadership style in rural schools, a matter which has serious consequences on the culture of teaching and learning. A probe in this direction is necessitated by the fact that despite the characteristic resource shortages in rural schools in the Eastern Cape, there have been some rural schools with Grade 12 examination pass rates that exceed 60%. This draws attention to the suggestion of Taole (2013), that principals view themselves only as managers and not as instructional leaders.

2.9 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed leadership, educational leadership and the relationships between instructional leadership and school outcomes. The causal model of Heck et al. (1990) which provided a framework for linking principal leadership and learner achievement was highlighted. A review of the literature presented correlational studies that include positive relationships between principals' leadership behaviours and learner achievement as well as the arguments of sceptics, leading to the concept of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership places emphasis on the activities of the school as an organisation, rather than on just the principal, suggesting that the achievement of the school hinges on the concerted effort of multiple players and not solely a one-man achievement. The theoretical framework for this study centred on the transformational leadership model.

However, the gap in literature is to ascertain why majority of the rural schools in the Eastern Cape are underperforming in the National Senior certificate examination, while a few others within their vicinity are performing credibly well in the same examination. The gap identified above leads us to the following questions: Is there a causal link between the instructional leadership and learner performance in the rural schools of the Eastern Cape, and secondly, is there an impact of instructional leadership on teacher activities, staff training and teaching and learning? The chapter closes with a brief narrative about underperforming rural schools in the Eastern Cape.

The following chapter will discuss the research design and methodology. The method of data collection and population sampling will be presented to show if there is a relationship between school performance and instructional leadership in the rural schools of the Eastern Cape. Regarding the schools with high learner performance, the researcher will also ascertain whether, in these schools, there is a collaborative culture which is characterised by mutual support.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The methodological tool used in this research investigated the influence instructional leadership has on teaching and learning in the rural schools of the Eastern Cape. This inquiry involved the collection of qualitative research data which provided sufficient information to allow the examination of instructional leadership and the culture of teaching and learning.

The study examined the principal's instructional leadership and its impact on teaching and learning specifically in rural schools of the Eastern Cape. To successfully undertake this study, it was relevant to examine the relationship between instructional leadership and learner performance. It was also necessary to investigate the impact instructional leadership has on teacher activities, staff training, and teaching and learning. The outcome of this investigation will be useful in determining whether instructional leadership can improve the quality of teaching and learning and ultimately improve learner performance in rural schools of the Eastern Cape.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research was utilised in this investigation because it gives a holistic understanding of how instructional leadership facilitate teaching and learning. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (1993), qualitative research is a realistic investigation which makes use of non-colliding methods of gathering information to ascertain the natural course of events and what participants deduce from them. It is also a type of interpretive inquiry where the researcher tries to make sense of what she sees, hears and understands (Creswell 2009). The paradigm on which this investigation is based is interpretive, which will facilitate a better understanding of what is seen and heard (Creswell 2009) from the participants interviewed.

In order to collect appropriate data which is relevant in answering the research questions, data was collected from 10 secondary schools in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality area, comprising the King William's Town and East London Districts of the Eastern Cape. These schools were selected mainly because of their past performances in the Grade 12 examination.

The Grade 12 examination in South Africa is the standard used to measure school performances, simply because the examination questions are all from the Department of Education, which is the recognised regulatory body in South Africa for educational issues and policies. The methodology also describes the research design, population, sampling and data collection. A descriptive case study was used. This is founded on the theoretical framework of effective leadership theories relevant for the educational environment of the Eastern Cape region of South Africa.

Against this backdrop, data was collected from interviews with teachers, principals and education officials. Secondary sources of data included books, Grade 12 results, academic dissertations and theses, articles and periodicals etc. With regard to the interviews, structured interviews were conducted to collect information. Face to face interviews were also conducted with senior education officials in charge of education in the province. This is appropriate because through close contact interviews with the stakeholders, various opinions may be obtained on issues deemed important to the researcher, which may cultivate a thorough comprehension of the issue under investigation. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993) interviews are basically vocal questionnaires structured in the same way as questionnaires.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

Interviews were the primary instrument utilised for data collection in this study. Interview questions for principals, teachers and education officials similar to the reliable ones used severally on issues pertaining to instructional leadership were utilised in this study. Structured face to face interviews were conducted with participants in a collaborative way that ensured their interpretation. Interviews were conducted with participants categorised as teachers, principals and senior education officials of the Department of Education. The essence of the interviews was to ascertain the views of the participants on various aspects pertaining to the problem statement. Grade 12 results of the schools under consideration were used as instrument to measure the impact of principals' instructional leadership. Data obtained from interviews were collected, sorted and analysed, and information from secondary sources was collected. Creswell (2007) suggests that it is essential to collect a large amount of data for analysis. Data sorting and pattern matching were employed to analyse data. These sources of information were relevant for gathering information in order to solutions to the research questions.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Research design may be defined as “a plan, blueprint or guide for data collection and interpretation” (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985). The research design is the strategy that is chosen by the researcher to incorporate the different components of the study in a systematic and logical way to effectively address the research problem.

To understand the impact of instructional leadership in the culture of teaching and learning, the study utilised qualitative methodological tools deemed essential for collecting, coding, sorting and analysing information relevant to the research question. Consequently, the research focused on five rural secondary schools in the province of the Eastern Cape that have been successful in the past Grade 12 examinations (performing schools) as well as five other rural secondary schools within the same province with low Grade 12 performances (underperforming schools). The study examined how school principals enable teachers to improve learner performances within the school using instructional leadership as a framework for the culture of teaching and learning. In this study, performing schools with pass rates of over 60% in the past Grade 12 examination in the Eastern Cape were compared to the underperforming schools with pass rates of less than 60% (GDE, 2007).

After identifying the schools that met these criteria, the researcher further sought teachers, in both categories of schools, with appropriate training, that is, professionally qualified teachers with the requisite knowledge of the subject matter, as well as teachers with different levels of expertise. These levels included fresh graduates or teachers who were new to the profession; intermediate level teachers, with approximately three to five years of teaching experience; and expert teachers, with five years or more of teaching experience. The next step in the investigation was to determine how these teachers facilitated the core activity (teaching and learning) in their respective schools. This was essential in understanding how performance – whether good or poor – is achieved in these schools. Spillane et al. (2003) posits that “instruction is a vast, complex, and multi-dimensional practice including the questions teachers pose for learners, the materials that teachers use, the ways learners interact with each other and the teacher, and classroom management”. Therefore, interviews were conducted with these teachers to determine whether instruction was clearly being displayed and how it impacted on learner performance. Interviews were also conducted with principals to gain insight into the instructional leadership role of the principals in their respective schools.

Structured interviews were also conducted with some officials from the Eastern Cape Department of Education, the District Director, and Circuit Managers in order to have a holistic understanding of the impact of instructional teaching and learning culture in the province. Data collected from these interviews, learners' past results and secondary sources of information were sorted, coded and analysed to provide essential answers to the following research questions:

Research Question

What is the impact of the principal's instructional leadership role on the culture of teaching and learning in rural schools of the Eastern Cape?

To answer the above question the following sub-questions were also formulated by the researcher:

- What is the relationship between instructional leadership and learner performance?
- What is the impact of instructional leadership on teacher activities, staff training and teaching and learning?

3.5 RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The research population refers to the group from which the researcher generalises or the selected participants that are part of the sample size of the study (Trochin 2000). This research which investigated the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning, had a population of 55 participants. This population size was made up mainly of participants from the 10 rural schools investigated. Out of this study population, 5 participants were senior officials of the Eastern Cape Department of Education such as the Director and Circuit Managers, 10 participants were principals and 40 were teachers of the rural schools. In terms of the research sample, the convenient sampling method was utilised for the research. The convenience sampling method is centred on research sample availability (Leedy, 1993).

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

According to Bless and Higson Smith (2000), the three methods of collecting research data include, observation, interviews and questionnaires. This study utilised interviews, learners past Grade 12 National Senior certificate examination results, and secondary sources such as thesis, articles and periodicals, for data collection. Interviews were conducted on teachers and principals of ten rural schools. Five of these rural schools were specifically selected because of their consistent good performances in past Grade 12 National Senior Certificate Examination; while the other five for their consistent poor performances in the same examination, over the same period of time. Significantly these interviews conducted on teachers and principals of the ten rural schools utilised interview questions similar to those conducted by Reitzug (1989) in his interview of teachers in effective schools. Data of past academic performances of the ten rural schools under consideration were also collected through learners results of past Grade 12 National Senior Certificate Examinations obtained from the Eastern Cape Department of Education website. Other sources of data collection were thesis, articles and periodicals relevant to the study. It is pertinent to note that every data collected was useful in establishing the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected from participants interviewed were labelled, coded and arranged in thematic categories in order that similarities and differences could be recognised. Thereafter, the information gleaned was sorted and analysed to provide relevant answers to the research question (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The analysis of participants interviews sort to establish among other things, the utilisation of instructional leadership by principals. The data obtained from learner's performances in the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate Examination of the ten rural schools were sorted, labelled, coded and matched against the data obtained from the interviews. The intention of the use of the record of school results was to establish the relationship between the principals instructional leadership role and learners performances in the ten rural schools investigated. In other words, to measure the impact of instructional leadership behaviour of the principals of the ten rural secondary schools on issues concerning teacher engagement, staff development, teaching and learning culture and learner academic performance. Further, the data from secondary sources, were likewise coded and classified in terms of their similarities and differences to all the data obtained and analysed, to provide

support to the investigation.

3.8 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENT

The reliability of a research instrument is a proof of the consistency of that research instrument (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). The measure of precision and consistency of the instrument utilised indicates its research reliability. Its validity is associated with the correctness of the instrument (Whitelaw, 2001).

The research instrument used in this research is reliable. As previously mentioned, the interview questions are similar to those which have been utilised successfully by Reitzug (1989) in establishing the culture centred on a sense of family through interviews of teachers in effective schools. It was also reliably used in the research that concluded that teachers' esprit and confidence developed as a result of their principals' behaviour. Praise and support were factors responsible for learner academic performance (White & Stevens, 1988). The interview questions for principals and teachers are reliable as they are similar to those successfully used by Pettigrew II (2013) in his study titled "The Perception of Principal Instructional Leadership Practices on 8th Grade Ohio Achievement Assembly (OAA), Cleveland University".

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher complied with ethical procedures by means of writing to the appropriate authorities to obtain permission to conduct interviews in the schools under study. Permission was also obtained from the participating principals. The identity of participating schools, teachers and principals were kept confidential by the researcher. Information disclosed to the researcher were kept confidential. The rights of authors cited in the study were duly observed. The researcher ensure that the findings of the investigation were reported with fairness and accuracy.

3.10 LIMITATION

Limitations are those events or circumstances that exceeds the researcher's control and further places restrictions on the accomplishment of the study and/or the interpretation and reliability of the findings (Price & Murnan, 2004:66-67). The following were the restrictions encountered

in this research:

- 1 Restrictions posed by time. Being able to multi-task became a great challenge due to time constraint.
- 2 The study relied on voluntary cooperation of participants. It was an uphill task for the researcher to complete the administration of research instrument (interviews) due to the nature of the job of the principals, teachers and the busy schedule of senior officials of the Department of Education.
- 3 Participants could misinterpret questions base on their inability to express their views.

3.11 RESEARCH DELIMITATION

This research concentrated only on instructional leadership as a driver of a positive culture of teaching and learning which promotes high academic performances in schools. Other leadership models were not investigated and discussed since they fell outside of the scope of this investigation. Furthermore, the study centred entirely on public schools within the Buffalo City Municipality District.

3.12 SUMMARY

This research provided a platform for the principals' instructional leadership to be viewed through the eyes of the teachers and the education officials by means of the examination of the impact of the principal's instructional leadership role on learner performance. Information was generated through the use of instruments known as structured interviews and the Grade 12 results from the archives of the Department of Education. The sample population was taken from teachers and principals of ten rural schools in the Eastern Cape of both performing and underperforming schools and education officials within the region. In addition to this, the study was accomplished by utilising the requisite qualitative methodological tools, which is deemed appropriate for dealing with issues that require perceptions and emotions, which in this case is the teachers' perception of the impact of the principal's instructional leadership role on the culture of teaching and learning and ultimately on school performance. This study is relevant because it will enhance the body of knowledge in education management, especially as it concerns instructional leadership and learner/school performances.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described the research design and methodology used in the study for data collection. In this chapter the researcher presents, analyses and discusses the data gathered during the field study which consisted of interviews conducted with principals, educators and officials of the Eastern Cape Department of Education. Data processing included analysis of written documentation and interview data. Finally, the research findings and their implications are discussed.

The results of this research study include a description of the ten schools involved and a discussion in terms of their location, the teachers' information, principals' information and the schools' infrastructure. Further, the characteristics of the participants are described and the chapter attempts to address the fundamental research question and the relevant sub-question raised in Chapter 1. A fundamental aspect of this section is that the qualitative method should reveal the actual perceptions and stance of the target groups regarding the concept of instructional leadership and its impact on the culture of teaching and learning.

4.2 SETTING

Following the obtaining of the ethical clearance, letters providing information and requesting permission to conduct interviews were written and distributed to participants chosen by means of convenience sampling.

Structured interviews with participants were personally conducted by the researcher. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with teachers, heads of schools and education officials of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality area who were kind enough to grant consent to be interviewed for the purpose of this research. The researcher chose to conduct structured interviews due to the busy schedules of the participants. The questions were deemed valid and reliable because they have previously been used on various occasions by researchers.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

4.3.1 Data collection methods

The study involved the use of two qualitative data collection methods. These were the conducting of face-to-face interviews and the analysis of written documents. Structured interviews were conducted with school heads and educators, as well as with Circuit Managers, District Directors and Deputy District Directors. In addition to the interviews, the researcher further looked into certain written documents which included the school's past results in the Grade 12 examination.

4.4 RATING OF RESPONSES

For this research, the population sample consisted of forty teachers. Of this number, 36 teachers complied, which gives a 90% response rate. Ten heads of schools were also approached, of whom only six (6) were able to make themselves available for interview, providing a 60% response rate. With regard to the education officials, 3 out of the 5 who were approached, complied (60% response rate).

4.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1 Distribution of participants

	No of participants	Compliance rate	% of participants
Education officials	5	3	60
Principals	10	6	60
Educators	40	36	90

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of participants and the percentage of the compliance rate in the study. From the table above, out of the ten principals from the ten schools under consideration in the research, only six complied, giving a rate of 60%. Out of the forty educators from the ten schools, thirty-six were available and willing to be interviewed, giving a rate of 90%. Three out of the five top education officials were available for interview, giving

a rate of 60%.

Table 4.2 Demographic information of participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	24	53
Male	21	47
TOTAL	45	100

Table 4.2 above shows the demographic of participants in the research. The demographic of the research had a frequency of 24 female and 21 male, which gave a total frequency of forty-five participants. The percentage of female participants was 53, while the male was 47.

Table 4.3 Age frequency

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21 – 30	-	-
31 – 40	15	33.3
41 – 50	19	42.2
51 – 60	11	24.4
61 and above	-	-

Table 4.3 shows the age frequency of the participants in this research. Between the ages of 31 – 40, the frequency was fifteen, which was 33.3%. Between the ages of 41 – 50, the frequency was nineteen and the percentage was 42.2. Between the ages of 51 – 60, the frequency was eleven and the percentage was 24.4. However, the ages between 21 – 30 and 60 and above respectively, showed zero frequency and zero percentage.

Table 4.4 Highest qualification of the participants (36 educators)

Qualification	Frequency	%
Diploma in Education	22	61
Bachelor's degree in Education	9	25
Honours degree in Education	5	14
Master's degree	-	-
Doctoral degree	-	-

Table 4.4 above shows the qualification of the participants. The qualifications included: Diploma in Education, of which the frequency was 22 and the percentage 61; Bachelor in Education had a frequency of 9 and a percentage of 25; Honours degree in Education had a frequency of 5 and a percentage of 14. However, there was a zero frequency and zero percentage respectively of Master and Doctoral degrees.

Table 4.5 Years of teaching experience of the participants

Years of teaching experience	Frequency	%
3-5	-	-
6-10	11	31
11-15	7	19
16-20	4	11
21 and above	14	39

Table 4.5 above shows the years of teaching experience of the participants. The years ranged from 6 – 10 with a frequency of eleven and a percentage of 31. Years of experience of participants also ranged from 11 – 15 with a frequency of 7 and a percentage of 19. Further years of experience ranged from 16 – 20 with a frequency of 4 and percentage of 11. Finally, years of experience of participants ranged from 21 and above, the frequency was 14 and a percentage of 39. However, there was a zero frequency and percentage for participants with 3 – 5 years of experience.

Table 4.6 Categorisation of educators according to type of school

District	Designation of educators	Performing school (Group A)	Under-performing school (Group B)	Fee-paying school	Non-fee paying school
BCM	School 1	4		–	✓
BCM	School 2		4	–	✓
BCM	School 3		3	–	✓
BCM	School 4		4	–	✓
BCM	School 5		4	–	✓
BCM	School 6	4		–	✓
BCM	School 7	3		–	✓
BCM	School 8	3		–	✓
BCM	School 9	4		–	✓
BCM	School 10		3	–	✓
TOTAL	36	18	18		

Table 4.6 above shows the categories of participants according the type of schools. The schools were categorised as “Performing Schools (Group A),” and “Under - Performing Schools (Group B).” A total of 18 participants under each category were interviewed. All ten schools under consideration were non-fee paying schools.

Table 4.7 Demographic information of principals and categorisation of their schools

District	Designation	Gender	Years as principal	Highest qualification	Performing school (Group A)	Under-performing school (Group B)	Fee-paying school	Non-fee paying school
BCM	School 1	F	29	B.Ed Hons	✓		–	✓
BCM	School 2	F	7	B. Ed		✓	–	✓
BCM	School 3	M	-	-		✓	–	✓
BCM	School 4	F	10	Diploma		✓	–	✓
BCM	School 5	M	-	-		✓	–	✓
BCM	School 6	M	11	B. Ed	✓		–	✓
BCM	School 7	M	-	-	✓		–	✓
BCM	School 8	F	15	Diploma	✓		–	✓
BCM	School 9	F	-	-	✓		–	✓
BCM	School 10	M	8	B. Ed		✓	–	✓
TOTAL	10		6					

Table 4.7 shows the demographic information of principals and categorisation of their schools into group A and group B. The table also shows the highest qualification, gender as well as years of experience of the principals.

Table 4.8 Characteristics of education official participants

District	Designation	Gender	Age	Years of experience	Highest Qualification
BCM	A	M	58	11	B.Ed Hons
	B	M	57	5	B.Ed Hons
	C	F	54	4	B.Ed Hons
TOTAL	3				

Table 4.8 above shows the characteristics of top education officials who were interviewed, which includes the gender, age, years of experience and highest level of education. For the sake of confidentiality, these participants have been designated A, B and C.

4.6 FINDINGS: INTERVIEWS

In this section, findings of the interviews conducted with educators and principals of selected rural schools of Eastern Cape are presented. Further, findings of the interviews of selected senior officials of the Department of Education in BCM District responsible for providing guidance to the principals in the District are also presented.

Data from interviews conducted with educators, principals, and the officials of the Eastern Cape Education Department are presented based on thematic categories. These categories are listed as follows: concept of instructional leadership; professional development of teachers; monitoring learner performance; fostering teacher collaboration, and promoting culture of teaching and learning.

4.6.1 Thematic category 1: Concept of instructional leadership

The rationale behind this thematic category was to assess the extent to which the participants understood the concept of instructional leadership. When asked about their understanding of instructional leadership, different perceptions of the concept were expressed regarding what instructional leadership implies. For some participants, instructional leadership is about giving guidance, direction, influence and motivation regarding information, while others believe it simply involves instructions of what to do and how to do it.

Thematic question: What are educators' perceptions of instructional leadership?

According to an educator interviewed “*instructional leadership is the management of curriculum and instruction by a school principal. How it involves setting clear goals, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote learners learning and growth*”.

In the same vein, instructional leadership was viewed by another educator as “*the management of school curriculum and instruction by a school principal in such a way that teaching functions are shared among the educators*”.

There was also the perception of an instructional leader as one who gives clear instructions to the subordinates and monitors and evaluates their responses in achieving a particular goal.

In this regard an educator defined instructional leadership as *“the ability to set a code of behaviour and monitor compliance”*.

There were some participants who were of the opinion that instructional leaders have the prerogative entrusted to leaders of institutions to give instructions to their subordinates. This perception was summed up by an educator as follows: *“Instructional leaders only give instructions with little or no consultations with educators”*.

Participants also viewed instructional leadership from the perspective of delegation. Thus a few participants regarded instructional leaders as principals able to delegate duties in such a way that every educator participates in the education of the learners.

Finally instructional leadership was perceived as a great relationship between an employee and an employer, where the instructional leader knows the performance of the employee in terms of whether it is good or poor.

Thematic question: What are the principals’ perceptions, aims and goals as instructional leaders?

During the different interviews conducted with principals, different responses were given about their perception of what instructional leadership entails.

One principal expressed her understanding of instructional leadership as:

“Administrative task which includes a leading role of a principal in a process of supporting professional development of educators, efficient use of resources, good communication in order to improve learning of learners”.

A second principal gave her perception of instructional leadership as:

“One who is firm and confident to lead, demonstrate and delegate and monitor all that has been agreed upon. He is always a strategist for improvement”.

Similarly, instructional leadership has been viewed as: *“A manner of giving direction to the educators on what they are supposed to be doing in class when following the CAPS policy”*.

Instructional leadership was also seen as: *“Managing all that has to do with providing enough support by principal so that quality teaching and learning take place in school, and learners learn effectively and teachers perform at their level best”*.

Instructional leadership was also perceived as: *“Setting up goals, managing the school curriculum and ensuring optimum utilisation of both human and physical resources”*.

Another principal gave his understanding of the concept of instructional leadership as:

“One who understands and communicates the vision of the school, monitors teaching and learning activities to ensure that curriculum is well delivered and provides adequate support to teachers and learners in order to achieve the set goals”.

In respect to the principal’s aims and goals as an instructional leader, different views were highlighted during the interviews. The following views were expressed:

- It is quality teaching and learning that will ensure we produce responsible and educated adults.
- It is to set clear goals and objectives in curriculum management and to provide all resources that will make teaching and learning effective.
- To achieve good results in terms of learner performance and enable educators to work in an environment that will promote these results.
- To have an impact on knowledge. To ensure that followers are convinced and determined.
- To create a professional learning environment for learners, to support educators in their attempt to offer high quality service and to communicate with all the stakeholders in order to achieve the best performance for learners.

The highlight of the investigation was the interview conducted with senior officials of the Department of Education. As the regulating authority it was important to gain an insight into

their views on instructional leadership, on the principals' role as drivers of education policies, and on their perception of the fundamental issues causing the poor Grade 12 results of rural schools within the Eastern Cape.

Thematic question: What are the education officials' perceptions regarding instructional leadership?

The concept of instructional leadership was defined by an education official as follows:

"Leadership whose focus is creating an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning characterised by the proper implementation and supervision of the curriculum."

The principal's instructional leadership role

The principals' instructional leadership role as highlighted by the education officials was described as follows:

"Ensuring that there is a time table that is CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) compliant."

"Monitoring completion of syllabus/topics on time and revision."

"Recruiting skilled educators."

4.6.2 Thematic category 2: Professional development of teachers

Thematic question: What do you understand by the instructional leadership role in terms of teacher development? (Educators' views)

Most of the participants gave similar responses in regard to the measures their principals have utilised in ensuring the continuous development of teachers. Some participants stated that their principals have encouraged them to enrich their scope of knowledge by attending workshops and seminars organised by the Education Department. They mentioned that some of these workshops are designed to address specific challenges or needs of the profession, for example

computer literacy programmes designed to provide training for specific teachers who need to be trained in that field.

Other participants stated that their principals do instigate in-service training sessions as a way of giving feedback by those who may have been selected to attend certain developmental workshops organised or sponsored by the Education Department. According to the participants, these in-service sessions have to a certain extent, served the same purpose as having them attend the actual workshops.

Still within the scope of this thematic statement, the responses given by some participants suggest that their principals support the improvement of teachers and encourage them as teachers to step outside the confines of their classrooms and strive to transform the school from being merely a work place to becoming a learning environment for both the learners and the teachers.

In addition, there were other participants who stated that implementing the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) and hosting discussion forums in order to share ideas were measures that their respective principals have utilised in promoting teacher development in their schools.

Thematic question: What is the role of principals in promoting continuous professional development of teachers? (Principals' responses)

Promoting school-wide teacher development is one of the characteristics of an instructional leader. During the researcher's interview of participants in regard to how each respondent is able to promote teacher development in their school, the following were the responses given:

"Teacher are to be sensitive to knowledge. They must broaden their knowledge horizon. To attend workshop and subject meetings."

"Teachers get an opportunity to develop each other through departmental support groups."

"I promote teacher development by allowing teachers to attend workshops and having one-on-one interviews with teachers to detect their needs and challenges".

“Teacher development is promoted when we agree on the culture of doing things at the school and bringing information that is documented that would assist the teachers”.

“The development of teachers is promoted by developing the school improvement plan, leading and managing the implementation of the plan, organising subject advisors to come and assist teachers as an informed teacher influences the learner achievement”.

Thematic question: What support is forthcoming from the Department of Education?

Principals are the vehicles through which education policies and reform policies are delivered. It therefore becomes important to ascertain the level of support that they are receiving from the Department of Basic Education. The researcher was able gain an insight into the degree of support being given to principals by the department from the responses given below by participating principals:

“The Department needs to fill teaching posts as soon as they become vacant and provide enough administrative and academic personnel. However, minimal support is given.”

“We need the Department of Education in collaboration with other stakeholders to organise leadership seminars at regular intervals. Departmental officials make regular visit in support of the school and also provide resources that will benefit learners.”

“We need the Department of Education to provide us with resources. With regard to support, the Department is doing their level best but rural schools are always being disadvantaged. Our parents are poor and would not go the extra mile”.

***Thematic question: What is the impact of teacher development towards school performance?
(Responses from education officials)***

On the impact of teacher development towards the performance of rural schools, these were the views of the participants.

The first respondent interviewed stated that teacher development must be tailored to address the peculiar teaching and learning needs of the rural school.

The second respondent stated that teacher development is only essential where educators are trained to address identified shortcomings in their area of specialisation; this respondent reiterated the same views as the third respondent who believe that teacher development must be structured to solve teaching and learning problems.

The third respondent also stressed that monitoring and evaluation must accompany teacher development to see how training translates to improved school performance.

4.6.3 Thematic category 3: Monitoring learner performance

***Thematic question: How does the principal guide and monitor the delivery of instructions?
(Responses of educators)***

With regard to the above thematic question, the participating teachers interviewed expressed both various views. Some of the views expressed by participants related to the use of meetings as a tool utilised by the principals to guide and monitor the delivery of instructions. The other views expressed by the participants included the principals' involvement of the departmental heads in guiding and monitoring the delivery of instructions. The departmental heads check learners' books and portfolios and control syllabus coverage and thereafter report back to the principals.

According to other participants, the principals used other avenues such as class visits, circulation of internal memos, and one-on-one communication with educators as a way monitoring syllabus coverage.

***Thematic question: What do you understand by the supervisory role of the principal?
(Principals' responses)***

Principals were asked about the purpose of supervision as instructional leaders and whether they see the supervision of instructions as their responsibility.

On the purpose of supervision, one of the principals interviewed responded that it is intended to make sure that all the educators understand and perform their respective roles appropriately and to give personal support and professional development. According to her, she sees the

supervision of teaching and learning as her responsibility and further stated that supervision is important in identifying and remedying challenges very early.

Another principal believes that the purpose of supervision is to support teachers where they lack skills by checking on how they deliver lessons and adhere to the principles of the subject. She stated further that supervision, which comes as a form of support for the teachers, is the responsibility of the principal.

Similarly, another principal interviewed believes that the purpose of supervision is to provide support, encouragement and motivation to teachers. She went on to state that supervision is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place.

The purpose of supervision according to the next respondent is to ensure accountability of learners, educators and the school management team. In his opinion, supervision is the responsibility of the principal as the accounting officer.

Another principal stated that the purpose of supervision is to know how the work is done, how the information is imparted and when to assist where necessary. In his opinion, supervision of teaching is the responsibility of the principal as a way of preventing chaos.

***Thematic question: How do principals monitor the academic progress of learners?
(Educators' responses)***

In response to the question above, the responses of the educators interviewed have been summarised and categorised according to similarity:

- School based moderation
- By analysing results
- By monitoring teaching periods and class registers
- From educators' monthly and quarterly academic reports to the principal
- Through the delegation of duties to departmental heads
- Through planning, intervention and improvement strategies
- Through continuous assessment of learners.

Thematic question: How do principals track learners' academic performance? (Principals' responses)

It is important for principals as instructional leaders to track learners' academic progress in order to verify that meaningful teaching and learning is taking place and also to plan and implement intervention strategies aimed at improving learning where necessary. The following are the responses received from the participating principals:

"Learners are made to write 5 informal tests and two formal tests at the end of the quarter."

"We ensure that learners receive progress report regularly. Teachers must analyse results and identify high performers and learners at risk, and educators must develop subject improvement plans."

"Progress is tracked by having quarterly progress reports, analysing results on a quarterly basis and coming up with intervention strategies."

"Academic performance of our learners is tracked by frequent evaluations in each subject so as to improve learner self-esteem during the learning process, and formal continuous assessments. Parents are reported to about the progress of their children on a quarterly basis."

"Learners are made to write two tests a month and the results of the tests are then analysed to check for progress".

"Results are analysed at the end of the quarter and subject improvement plans are designed to assist those with poor performance."

Thematic question: What are the factors contributing to the performance of rural schools within the district? (Education officials)

A breakdown of the factors contributing to performance highlighted by the participants during the interviews is as followings:

- The availability of resources impacts on the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools.
- The number of specialist and qualified educators in rural schools.
- The paradox of language as a barrier to learning.
- Accessibility and support by the Education Department district office.
- Principal as instructional leader supported by a team of dedicated staff and the school's SMT.
- The prevalence of social ills that affect learner performances.

Thematic question: What would you say is the reason for poor performance in rural schools? (Education officials' responses)

It was the view of one of the officials that poor performances by rural schools is due mainly to the resourcing model that is not customised for schools in the rural area. He further stated that rural schools are usually not the preferred locations of teaching by specialist educators.

Another official believes that rural schools perform poorly because of language barriers to learning. According to him, learners grappling with English as a second language find it difficult to comprehend the subject matter taught in English. He further stated that where the information is explained in the learner's home language, the learners still find it difficult to decode examination questions in English or even to express themselves in English.

A third official attributed poor performance of rural schools to the lack of instructional leadership qualities of principals. In addition, she believes that the accessibility and support of the Education Department district offices play a major role in school performances. Some of the schools are too far from the district offices coupled with bad roads and the lack of electricity.

Thematic question: What are the factors contributing to some rural schools performing better than others?

The views of the education officials on the factors contributing to why rural schools differ in terms of learner performance are summarised as follows:

- Availability of qualified principals, dedicated teaching staff and supportive SMT members.
- The principal's ability to perform the role necessary for school achievement.
- Availability of subject specialists.
- Quality of teacher development responsive to teaching and learning requirements.
- Disciplined environment that prevents the prevalence of social ills such as substance abuse and early pregnancy.

Thematic question: What is the role of the principal in regard to school achievement? (Education officials)

The participants expressed their views on the principals' role in regard to school achievement as follows:

- The principal's role is central and pivotal to school achievement.
- The principal enhances the culture of teaching and learning.
- The principal should ensure the enforcement of discipline.
- The principal should ensure communication of new procedures and information to staff.
- Motivation of staff for upward performance depends largely on the principal.
- The principal is responsible for teacher and staff development.
- The principal is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of instruction.

Thematic question: Are principals driving the implementation of educational policies in rural schools?

On the implementation of educational policies by rural school principals, the participants' views were as follows:

- Principals of rural schools in the Eastern Cape facilitate policy implementation. The problem is the operational context of these policies due to reduced learner number and teaching staff.

- Policies are sometimes not successfully implemented because of the lack of facilities.
- A number of factors affect the effective implementation of policies. These include: principal's lack of aptitude and the lack of dedication by the teaching staff.

Thematic question: Is there a relationship between instructional leadership and learner performance? (Education officials)

In the opinion of the education officials:

- there is a strong relationship between the principal's instructional leadership role and learners' performance;
- through the principals' monitoring of teacher and learner activities, the relationship between instructional leadership and learner performance is established; and
- there is definitely a linkage between the instructional leadership role of a principal and excellent teacher and learner performances.

4.6.4 Thematic category 4: Fostering teacher collaboration

Thematic question: What are the principals' perceptions of the collaborative role of teachers in achieving the principals' instructional leadership goals?

It is the view of one principal that teachers who are visionaries with a strong commitment to continual improvement and who feel secure in their work, would definitely assist an instructional leader whose goals are clearly stated. He further stated that in order to achieve a culture of teaching and learning in the school, principals should acknowledge their individual strengths and recognise their weaknesses to enable them get the maximum support needed from the teachers.

Another principal believes that in achieving her instructional leadership goals, it is the role of educators to follow their annual teaching plan as this will lead to the attainment of positive results. This principal feels that collaboration with teachers can be achieved by holding School Management Team (SMT) meetings where each SMT member will draw up a plan to assist in

checking up on what has been done by the educators, and will then report back to the SMT and the teacher at staff meetings.

Further, another principal stated that teachers would be able to produce excellent result if they were motivated and encouraged by the provision of necessary skills and resources. In terms of collaboration with teachers, this principal stated that principals must involve teachers in management tasks such as planning, controlling, managing and leading.

In the same vein, another principal is of the opinion that teachers play a crucial role in ensuring quality teaching and learning. He stated further that, for the principal to successfully collaborate with teachers in creating a culture of teaching and learning, the principal must lead by example and also communicate activities in advance to educators.

One principal is of the view that teachers would definitely achieve good results if they are able to be followed by a large number of learners. She stated further that principals should collaborate with educators to promote teaching and learning by encouraging team work, recognising differences and motivating teachers.

Thematic question: Is team collaboration more effective than the principal's unilateral decision making? (Education officials)

Concerning the use of collaboration as opposed to the principal's unilateral effort to improve performances, the three participants stated as follows:

"The collaboration of all stakeholders in decision making is always more effective and result oriented."

"Absolutely it is the collaborative culture in any organisation that yields results."

"Performances can only be improved with the mutual support of all participants."

4.6.5 Thematic category 5: Culture of teaching and learning

Thematic question: What is the role of instructional leadership in creating a culture of teaching and learning? (Educators' responses)

The educators interviewed differed in their perceptions of the role of instructional leaders in creating a culture of teaching and learning in schools.

Some participants interviewed stated that it was the responsibility of the principal to strive for proficiency, to have good communication skills and to provide teachers with resources; having a positive, vibrant and visible presence in the school should also not be underestimated.

In the same vein, other participants stated that in creating a culture of teaching and learning, the role of the instructional leader is to communicate with teachers in a professional way by means of using policies.

For some participants, the instructional leader role in creating a culture of teaching and learning can be advanced by participatory management, which enables his or her subordinates to understand what is expected of them.

Still other participants interviewed reiterated the significance of building a good relationship between teachers and learners through communication; the instructional leader's role should contribute towards enhancing the culture of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, certain participants related the instructional leader's role in creating a culture of teaching and learning to showing appreciation for educators by acknowledging good performance.

The instructional leader's role in creating a culture of teaching and learning was also perceived as providing clear instructions to teachers and providing them with written notices and circulars on education policies.

There were also suggestions from participants that the instructional leader's role in creating a

culture of teaching and learning is performed through giving instructions to teachers.

Thematic question: What are the characteristics of the instructional leadership role of individual principals that impact on the culture of teaching and learning?

In terms of the participants' perceived characteristics of their principal as an instructional leader that impact on the culture of teaching and learning, there were also diverse views. Some participants simply stated that their principal's proactivity as instructional leader has an impact on teaching and learning in their school. According to one of them, his principal's involvement in risk management affords him the opportunity to better manage and control eventualities.

Enumerating the characteristics of their principals' instructional leadership traits, other participants described their principal as being transparent in decision making, showing empathy, being firm, being a good listener and having the ability to monitor teachers in the performance of their duties.

One of the participants described his principal as an educator, administrator, mentor and motivator. Similarly, another respondent described her principal as having exemplary leadership traits, having confidence and pursuing set goals while giving clarity on issues.

Still other participants described their principal as having the ability to define the school mission and vision while promoting a positive and supportive work environment, building teamwork and having good communication skills.

Thematic question: What steps are taken by principals to empower teachers in order to improve the culture of teaching and learning?

Diverse views were expressed by participants in regard to how their respective principals have empowered them to improve the culture of teaching and learning.

Some of the participants stated that their principals encouraged teamwork as a way of improving the culture of teaching and learning. These participants stated that encouraging team work where teachers are urged to assist themselves by sharing ideas and best practices with their respective colleagues in order to work towards the greater good of their schools, is a positive strategy used by their principals.

Other participants answered this question by stating that their principals do equip them with relevant teaching aids and resources in order to aid the improvement of the culture of teaching and learning. Some participants also mentioned that class observation or class visitation was an important activity of their respective principals in ensuring the improvement of the culture of teaching and learning.

A few of the participants stated that their principals act as positive role models and also as mentors to their teachers. One particular respondent stated that her principal employs the delegation of duties as a way of improving the culture of teaching and learning, and another respondent mentioned effective time management and giving guidance to teachers as ways that her principal ensures the improvement of the culture of teaching and learning.

Further responses were:

“We need the Department of Education to provide legal workshops on how to deal with some labour issues that impact on teaching and learning. The Department of Education has done their best in providing us with teaching resources but still fall short on human resources that would add to the value of teaching and learning.”

“Any support from the Department of Education ranging from advisory to monetary assistance will be welcomed. I am always willing to take advice from any other person or institution whose interest is in education. Regarding support from the Department, we get visits from officials to our school to make sure that everything is in order. We are supplied with textbooks and financial assistance. I am always invited to various workshops for my professional development.”

4.7 DATA FROM THE SCHOOL ARCHIVES

Data was also collected from the school archives, particularly to analyse the impact of the principals’ instructional leadership role on school academic performances. The data on the past Grade 12 results of the schools under consideration was considered indicative of the learner’s academic performances. Table 4.9 below presents the data regarding the performance of the schools in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) (Grade 12) examinations of the ten schools

under consideration from the period of 2013 to 2017.

For the purpose of the study, five schools were categorised as performing schools (Group A), while the other five schools were categorised as underperforming schools (Group B) as indicated in Table 4.9 (below) and the records of the learner performances were drawn from the period of 2013 to 2017.

Notably, the learners of the schools categorised under Group A achieved a better Grade 12 result by comparison (see Table 4.9 below).

Table 4.9: National Senior Certificate (NSC) results in percentages from 2013 – 2017

Year		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Provincial pass rate %		64.9	65.4	56.8	59.3	65.0
School pass rate %						
Performing Schools (Group A)	School 1	91.7	92.7	85.7	84.4	79.6
	School 6	88.4	87.3	80.0	83.7	84.5
	School 7	69.4	71.2	81.3	75.6	46.7
	School 8	89.6	66.0	77.4	91.7	83.3
	School 9	87.0	74.0	68.1	48.7	65.8
Underperforming Schools (Group B)	School 2	44.4	26.3	27.5	42.9	47.6
	School 3	28.2	53.8	23.3	2.7	38.5
	School 4	55.6	10.0	3.8	36.4	21.1
	School 5	43.0	22.7	30.4	13.3	34.1
	School 10	14.3	25.0	59.1	8.8	10.5

National Senior Certificate Examination: School performance report.

Table 4.9 shows the archival data of the Grade 12 results of the schools in the rural area of the Eastern Cape under examination from 2013 – 2017. For the sake of confidentiality, these schools have been designated school 1 to school 10. An analysis of the results shows that school 2, school 3, school 4, school 5 and school 10 performed below the provincial pass averages for

the period under scrutiny, with the one exception that school 10 achieved a pass rate of 59.1% in 2015, which was slightly above the 56.8% mark. In view of the above, these schools are considered as underperforming schools.

School 1, school 6, school 7, school 8, and school 9 achieved pass rates above the provincial pass rates for the years from 2013 to 2017, with a few fluctuations in 2016 and 2017 for school 7 and school 9 respectively. Against this backdrop, these schools are referred to as performing schools.

4.8 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This study examined the impact of the principals' instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning. Data was generated through structured interviews with participants that comprised principals, educators and senior education officials, as well as records of the Grade 12 results of the schools under consideration. This data was analysed by means of a thematic analysis. This research, which employed descriptive case study methods, naturally draws mainly on qualitative methodological tools, considered most suitable for data collection in order to answer the research question. Thematic categories, patterns, and themes emanating from the data gathered and analysed in this study provided the material for a thorough examination of the research problem.

Data from the Department of Education archives (National Senior Certificate Results) provided the Grade 12 scores of the rural schools in the Eastern Cape between 2013 and 2017. It can be deduced from the data that schools 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were performing schools because of the consistency in their pass rates, which were above the provincial pass rates within the period (see Table 4.9). Data collected from the archives revealed that schools 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10, on the other hand, performed below the provincial pass rates (see Table 4.9).

Interviews conducted with participants showed that some participants did not fully grasp the concept of instructional leadership. It was however clear from the responses of the participants at the schools considered to be performing schools, that their principals possess instructional leadership qualities. The analysis below is a summary of the findings:

- The majority (60%) of the participants interviewed suggested that their good Grade

12 passes were due mainly to the principals' professionalism in building a support structure for the school educators and the SMT.

- Participants (53.40%) attributed their success factors to the principals' ability to monitor instructions and track academic progress of learners.
- Most of the participants (75%) identified their principals' instructional leadership role in promoting teacher development as a key element of their success.
- Half of the participants (51%) believed that specialist subject educators employed by their principal was a major factor that influenced their good performance.
- Most participants (80%) opined that the principals' ability to maintain firm discipline amongst learners contributed immensely to their school's success.

On the factors that hampered the performances of the schools under consideration, the following were the findings:

- The majority of the participants interviewed (70%) did not fully comprehend the concept of instructional leadership. Their explanation of instructional leadership did not correlate with the concept in terms of the various tenets of instructional leadership which includes promoting a culture of teaching and learning, professional development of teachers, fostering teacher collaboration and monitoring learner performance. .
- The majority of the participants (60%) identified a high rate of indiscipline amongst the learners as a factor that led to their dismal performance in the Grade 12 examination. Against this backdrop, 52% of participants identified a high rate learner absenteeism as a major contributor to the poor Grade 12 performances, while 8% identified drug abuse and teenage pregnancy as factors hampering academic performance.
- A large majority (72%) of the participants attributed the schools' poor performance to the inadequate deployment of subject specialist teachers to rural schools.
- Some participants (40%) identified the principals' lack of control of educators as a major factor that has contributed to the poor Grade 12 performances.
- The inability of principals to adequately collaborate and relay the needs of the schools to the District office of the Education Department was identified by a number of participants (30%).

- An overwhelming preponderance of participants (85%) identified the principals' inability to build team spirit and gain the support of the SMT as a serious factor impacting on Grade 12 performance.
- Some of the participants (30%) were of the opinion that the inability of the principals to recruit the right calibre of teachers is a major impediment to their school's performances.
- Lack of monitoring of teacher performance was also identified by 45% of the participants as a factor that significantly affected their school's performance.
- 20% of the participants attributed their poor Grade 12 performances to the inability of their principal to ensure a healthy work environment because of their lack of problem solving techniques.

4.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the data collected have been presented according to thematic categories, patterns, and themes in order to relate to and reflect the conceptual framework of the study. This data was subsequently analysed to examine the impact of the principals' instructional leadership role on the culture of teaching and learning in the schools under consideration. A further discussion of the findings and their implications for the schools in the Eastern Cape was presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, all data collected were presented in thematic categories and carefully analysed. In this chapter the researcher has focused on a discussion of the findings and implications of the study. An attempt is also made to answer the research question and sub-questions, i.e.: What is the impact of the principal's instructional leadership role on the culture of teaching and learning?

- What is the relationship between instructional leadership and learner performance?
- What is the impact of instructional leadership on teacher activities, staff training and teaching and learning?

For the purpose of this research, I selected schools falling under the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality area of the Eastern Cape. The ten secondary schools in this research are rural schools established by the Eastern Cape Department of Education and were selected because of their academic performance. The information was obtained from interviews with participants and from the archive of the Department of Basic Education (ECDBE) about school performance.

5.2 DISCUSSION

5.2.1 The concept of instructional leadership

Some of the participants interviewed did not have a clear understanding of the concept of instructional leadership. This was evident from the interpretations given by participants of what instructional leadership entails. Their interpretation of instructional leadership did not include the tenets of the instructional leadership such as vision and mission, monitoring of instructions and implementation of curriculum, for example.

The concept of instructional leadership was summed up by an educator as follows:

“Instructional leaders only give instructions with little or no consultations with educators.”

Another respondent (a principal) interpreted the concept of instructional leadership to mean: *“One who is firm and confident to lead, demonstrate and delegate and monitor all that has been agreed upon. He is always a strategist for improvement”.*

Similarly, instructional leadership has been viewed by another principal as: *“A manner of giving direction to the educators on what they are supposed to be doing in class when following the CAPS policy”.*

In view of the above, it is evident that these participants only concentrated on the managerial aspects of their role as principals and lacked understanding of what instructional leadership techniques entail. These principals basically viewed their role mostly as managerial rather than as instructional leaders. It is inferred therefore, that these inadequacies have impacted on the culture of teaching and learning and ultimately the academic performances of these schools. The role of principals as instructional leaders demands more from principals than merely their responsibilities as managers. According to Bush (2003: 3), “without the necessary skills, many principals are overwhelmed by the task”, as far as their role as instructional leaders is concerned. Naidoo and Naidoo (2015) echo this view when they state that school principals who are well trained in “managerial models, very often struggle to acquire the knowledge and skills that they need to execute their functions as school heads and leaders of curriculum delivery”.

On the other hand, there were other participants who clearly understood what the concept of instructional leadership entails. Their interpretations of the concept fully provided a comprehensive description of the tenets of instructional leadership. A respondent defined instructional leadership as:

“Setting up goals, managing the school curriculum and ensuring optimum utilisation of both human and physical resources”.

Instructional leadership was also seen as: *“Managing all that has to do with providing enough support by principal so that quality teaching and learning take place in school, and learners learn effectively and teachers perform at their level best”.*

Another principal gave his understanding of the concept of instructional leadership as:

“ One who understands and communicates the vision of the school, monitors teaching and learning activities to ensure that the curriculum is well delivered and provides adequate support to teachers and learners in order to achieve the set goals”.

From the above, it is evident that these principals clearly understood the concept of instructional leadership and the role of principals as instructional leaders. Their understanding of the concept impacts greatly on the culture of teaching of their respective schools as well as on their school's performance.

5.2.2 Professional development of teachers

Promoting continuous professional development of teachers is an essential characteristic of the principal's role as an instructional leader. In light of this, teachers were interviewed in relation to continuous professional development. Similar responses were given in this regard as to how continuous professional development of teachers is being achieved. An overwhelming majority of the teachers who were interviewed stated that their principals do encourage them to attend workshops and seminars organised by the Department of Education. They also stated that in-service training sessions are also done within their respective schools to promote the professional development of the teachers. A few of the teachers stated that their principals have encouraged teacher development through the implementation of IQMS and by hosting discussion forums in order to facilitate the sharing of ideas amongst teachers.

Principals interviewed reiterated the responses given by the teachers as far as developmental workshops organised by the Department of Education are concerned. However, some of the responses given by principals create a certain amount of scepticism in regard to their commitment to the implementation of professional teacher development in their respective schools. The following is one of such responses:

“Teacher development is promoted when we agree on the culture of doing things at the school and bringing information that is documented that would assist the teachers”.

This response is indicative of the principal's lack of understanding of the importance and characteristics of professional teacher development. Information that is "documented to assist the teachers" cannot suffice as a developmental measure to enhance the skills necessary for the profession.

Another principal stated that

"The development of teachers is promoted by developing the school improvement plan, leading and managing the implementation of the plan, organising subject advisors to come and assist teachers as an informed teacher influences the learner achievement."

While we can agree that support from subject advisors is crucial, it may not be tailored to address specific needs of educators teaching in rural schools who are compelled to teach a variety of subjects – sometimes even those they lack the competence to teach. Further, the school improvement plan is an intervention technique or programme drawn up by the school management team in collaboration with the educators to address specific issues perceived as critical to the growth of the school. The school improvement plan is drawn up to accommodate a variety of issues affecting the school in general of which teacher development could be one. It is not designed specifically for teacher developmental purposes.

An analysis of the data collected revealed that those principals who could not substantiate their responses regarding teacher development were the principals of underperforming schools under consideration. A major impediment to learner performance in these schools was the principal's inability to employ specialist educators due to a variety of reasons including the lack of basic facilities. According to a senior education official interviewed, *"rural schools are usually not the preferred locations of teaching by specialist educators"*.

5.2.3 Monitoring learner performance

Being able to track learners' academic progress to ascertain the level of school effectiveness is one aspect of the principal's role as an instructional leader. The instructional leader supervises instructions and monitors curriculum delivery with a view to achieving increasing academic performance of the learners. Participants (teachers) interviewed were asked to state measures utilised by the principals in tracking academic progress. Some participants stated that the

departmental heads check books and portfolios of the learners and monitor syllabus coverage and thereafter report back to the principal. Below is a list of the responses given by educators with regard to how academic progress of the learners is being monitored:

- The implementation of school based moderation
- Analysing results
- By monitoring teaching periods and class registers
- From educators' monthly and quarterly academic reports to the principal
- Through the delegation of duties to departmental heads
- Through planning, intervention and improvement strategies
- By implementing continuous assessment of learners

All of the measures stated above are generic measures and if properly utilised could yield the desired results. Responses given by the principals correlate with those given above by the educators who were interviewed. When asked to explain the techniques utilised in tracking learners' progress, some of the principals responded as follows:

“Academic performance of our learners is tracked by frequent evaluations in each subject so as to impose self-esteem during the learning process, and formal continuous assessment in which parents are reported about the progress of their children on a quarterly basis”.

“Learners are made to write two tests a month and the results of the tests is then analysed to check for progress”.

“Results are analysed at the end of the quarter and subject improvement plans are designed to assist those with poor performance”.

My analysis of data collected showed that these measures are being utilised by principals of the underperforming schools under examination. The investigation carried out revealed that the desired results are yet to be achieved in the underperforming schools seeing that these schools are still recording poor Grade 12 pass rates. This shortfall poses possible questions as to the nature of the interventions that are in place to assist the underperforming learners. Are these principals able to identify the potential hindering factors affecting their school performances?

Have they taken adequate steps to address the problem of poor learner performance? These are the challenges that confront the principal as an instructional leader.

It is interesting to note that principals of the performing schools under consideration also operate according to similar dynamics as do those of the underperforming schools, yet they have been able to develop strategies to combat the problem of poor learner performance and have recorded a marked improvement in the academic progress of their learners (see Table 4.9). The fact that principals' instructional leadership plays an essential role in determining levels of school performances cannot be overemphasised. This statement has been corroborated by Dunford, Fawcett and Bennett (2000) in the assertion that effective leadership is one of the essential elements in the success of a school. Further, a U.S governmental study quoted by Sergiovanni (2001) states that:

“Principals are important! Indeed, no other school position has greater potential for maintaining and improving quality schools. In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. It is his leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what learners may or may not become. If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place; if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching; if learners are performing to the best of their ability one can almost always point to the principal's leadership as the key to success”.

Responses from senior education officials reiterated this view that there is a relationship between the instructional leadership role of principals and learner outcomes.

5.2.4 Fostering teacher collaboration

Teacher collaboration is one of the canons of instructional leadership. Collaboration, as opposed to working in isolation, creates room for increasing professional growth (Pounder, 1999). Therefore, the principal as an instructional leader, should find a way to provide meaningful opportunities for teacher collaboration.

When asked to explain their views on the collaborative role of teachers in achieving the principal's instructional leadership goals, the principals affirmed that teacher collaboration is essential to school effectiveness. Some stated that collaboration with the teachers is achieved by way of encouraging team work. Another stated that it is achieved through holding of school management team meetings, while another stated that collaboration is achieved when the principal shares information with the teachers. One principal stated that it is achieved by involving the teachers in management tasks, otherwise known as sharing instructional leadership.

Analysis of findings suggests that even though these principals acknowledged the importance of teacher collaboration, a number of the participating principals did not emphasise the collaborative practices of the teachers in their respective schools. Sharing information with teachers or holding school management team (SMT) meetings without creating a sound structure for teachers to bond for the purpose of working towards achieving a shared goal, is a futile process. Principals are *required* to collaborate meaningfully with teachers (Hallinger, 2003) for collaboration to be effective.

Nevertheless, findings reveal that there is the existence of a collaborative working environment among the teachers in schools where shared instructional leadership is practised. Some participating teachers stated that their principals promote teacher collaboration by encouraging teamwork among the teachers where ideas and best practices are shared in order to work towards the common goal. It is instructive to note that research on the effect of school leadership has revealed that there is an indirect impact on learner achievement essentially through the support of teachers by principals (Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Leithwood & Mascal, 2008).

5.2.5 Culture of teaching and learning

The phrase "school culture" relates to the philosophy, ethos and values of a school. It is one of the most complex and important concepts in education (Stoll, 2003). A school culture is what a school is known for and it develops with time. Louise Stoll (2003) states that "a school's culture is shaped by its history, context and the people in it". It is the way and manner in which things are done in a school (Deal & Kennedy, 1983) and is uniquely associated to a particular school (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989). The climate for teaching and learning is created by

school leadership and the principal is the most important individual in the leadership of a school.

Findings reveal how the participating teachers attempted to describe their respective principals' efforts in both creating and maintaining a sound culture of teaching and learning. Some teachers stated that their principals promote teamwork among teachers; other teachers stated that their principals provide them with relevant resources and teaching aids to improve the culture of teaching and learning. Yet other participants mentioned class visitations as an important aspect of their principal's role in ensuring a sound culture of teaching and learning. The delegation of duties, effective time management and giving guidance to the teachers are some of the other activities of principals that were mentioned by teachers as ways in which the improvement of the culture of teaching and learning can be ensured by the principals.

Judging from the Grade 12 results of the underperforming schools (see Table 4.9), it appears that the principals have not fully cultivated an effective teaching and learning culture in these schools. The essential aspect of "culture of teaching and learning" is consistency. Once values are formulated or cultivated, they must become a practice, and school values are no exception. The idea of encouraging teamwork among teachers must be positively reinforced to inspire growth in the academic activities of the school. The same applies to providing adequate support for the teachers and equipping teachers with solid teaching materials to aid meaningful teaching and learning. An occasional attempt by principals to improve teaching and learning activities simply to remedy a problem will not yield the desired outcome of cultivating a school culture. These interventions must be consistent in order for a pattern to be formed that can be viewed as an organisational or school culture. It is the role of the principal as an instructional leader to instil a sound culture of teaching and learning aimed at producing the desired goals of the school. There is no doubt that the goals of many schools include the achievement of excellent academic performance of their learners.

5.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE ARCHIVES (NSC RESULTS)

Apart from the interviews conducted with the participants, the researcher also gathered data from the archives of the National Senior Certificate Results for the period from 2013 to 2017. This data were collected for the purpose of measuring the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning. Findings show that the responses of the participants on the

principals' instructional leadership role correlate with the results of the schools. Most participants of the performing schools affirmed the instructional leadership qualities of their respective principals and the NSC results of these schools support findings drawn from the interviews (see Table 4.9). The NSC results of the performing schools showed a great deal of consistency regardless of the drop in performance for school 7 and school 9 in 2016 and 2017 respectively. These performances are significant in concluding that the principals' instructional leadership impacted positively on the culture of teaching and learning.

Similarly, the results of the underperforming schools which show a constant decline in performance is indicative of the principals' poor instructional leadership skills. This performance further corroborates the statements of the education officials interviewed, which suggest that there is a strong linkage between instructional leadership and learner performance.

5.4 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this research, the principals of the schools under examination with Grade 12 passes below 60% (referred to as underperforming schools) did not exhibit instructional leadership skills. This conclusion is obtained from an analysis of participants' statements and the Grade 12 results of these schools (from 2013 to 2017) under consideration.

At the same time, there is a link between instructional leadership and the Grade 12 passes of the performing schools under consideration which is evident in the records of the results from 2013 to 2017 (above 60%) and the responses of the participants to interviews. Significantly, the capability of the principals of these performing schools to function in the capacity as instructional leaders was assessed from the following tenets:

- Principal's ability to supervise the delivery of instruction
- Principal's ability to monitor learners' performance
- Principal's ability to foster teacher collaboration

In view of the above, it can be deduced that instructional leadership is the panacea for school effectiveness and success. However, it can also be argued that inadequate resources and poor facilities can impact negatively on the culture of teaching and learning in schools, thereby

leading to low learner performances. This research examined both performing and underperforming schools operating under similar circumstances in terms of facilities and inadequate resources. However, in spite of the lack of proper facilities, the performing schools have been able to record good Grade 12 pass rates for the period under consideration largely due to the instructional leadership roles of the principals. This translates to the fact that instructional leadership is still elusive in some rural schools in the Eastern Cape.

5.5 RESULTS OF RESEARCH

This research investigated the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning in rural schools of the Eastern Cape. Within the Eastern Cape Province there is a combination of rural, township and urban schools, which vary widely in terms of resources and facilities. Some of the schools in the rural areas of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality are poorly resourced and have inadequate facilities, while others are moderately equipped. Data from ten of these rural schools were analysed for the purpose of the research.

Data presented and analysed from interviews and the records of Grade 12 results, revealed that the principals of the underperforming schools (categorised as “Group B”) did not have a clear understanding of their instructional leadership roles and also lacked the requisite skills needed to function in that capacity. Hence, the Grade 12 performances of these schools for the years 2013 to 2017 were below 60% (see Table 4.9 above). The interpretation of this data, is that the principals’ lack of understanding of instructional leadership roles impacted negatively on the performances of the schools under consideration. On the other hand, data presented and analysed also revealed that principals of the performing schools (categorised as “Group A”) clearly utilised, to some extent, instructional leadership techniques. The interpretation of the data analysed revealed a positive impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning in these schools. Learners’ consistent passes in the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examination as indicated in the Grade 12 results of the schools which were above 60% for the period between 2013 and 2017 provided further proof for this analysis (see Table 4.9 above).

Therefore, the findings of this study draws from similar studies (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Mulford, 2008) conducted that revealed the impact of school leadership on learner academic performances. It supports studies which confirmed that school leadership contributes to learner

achievements (Cruickshank, 2017; Shatzer, 2014), as well as other relevant literature ((Louis, et al 2010) that established the nexus between school leadership and learner outcomes. Further, the findings of this study also draws from related studies that concluded on the impact of instructional leadership in enhancing learner performances (Kearney, 2005; Jenerette & Sherretz, 2007; Gamage, 2009 cited by Ricardo, 2011). It is instructive to note that effective instructional leadership is associated with the improved culture of teaching and learning in addition to enhanced teacher activities and staff development. Thus instructional leaders can increase student performances through their impact on the culture of teaching and learning, teacher activities, and staff training (Leithwood et al. 1990). Consequently, this study concludes that rural school principals can improve the academic achievement of their students by adopting instructional leadership approaches. In other words, instructional leadership can influence the quality of teaching and learning of rural schools located in the Eastern Cape of South Africa

5.6 IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The findings of this research supports the view that instructional leadership has a positive impact on the culture of teaching and learning of rural schools located in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. This supports the empirical findings that suggests a relationship between school leadership and learner achievement and affirms that instructional leadership improves learner academic achievement (Kearney, 2005; Jenerette and Sherretz, 2007; Gamage, 2009 cited by Ricardo, 2011; Louis, et al 2010). Consequently Principals of rural schools might be able to improve grade 12 learner pass rates by adopting instructional leadership. The implication of which might compensate not only for the huge investment made by government in the educational sector but the entire South African economy.

Based on the benefits the public and private sector organisations acquire from a sustained flow of skilled workers, the present shortage of skilled manpower in the country is disadvantageous to the economy. Thus a steady improvement in the rural school results will afford a steady improvement in the quality of learners available for placements in tertiary institutions. It will also gradually eliminate the skill crises that has plagued the economy for a long time. Even though there are enormous social economic gains to be achieved from learner academic

improvement, such as the eradication of poverty, crime and other such socio-economic saga. This study is intended to enlarge the body of knowledge on issues that pertain to education management especially as it relates to school leadership.

5.7 SUMMARY

This chapter showed in detail the findings of data collected through the interviews in order to answer the research question. The participants interviewed were teachers and principals of ten rural schools as well as certain officials of the Eastern Cape Department of Education. The Grade 12 results of the ten rural schools were also discussed in order to measure the impact of instructional leadership on learner performances which provide answers to the research questions.

The next chapter will provide recommendations for the study that examined the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning in the rural schools under examination.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This research was undertaken to examine the impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning in the rural schools of the Eastern Cape between 2013 and 2017. The results of the research indicate that some of the rural schools referred to as underperforming schools did not have principals who exhibited instructional leadership qualities. This conclusion was drawn from an analysis of the responses to interview questions, and from the archives of Grade 12 records in the Eastern Cape.

An important issue that emerged from this research was the inability of these principals to employ specialist educators, monitor the curriculum effectively, promote teacher collaboration or enforce discipline, which had a ripple effect on the culture of teaching and learning and ultimately affected the school's Grade 12 performances within the period under consideration.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

The first recommendation of this research therefore is for rural schools to adopt a culture of instructional leadership. This type of leadership has the capability of fostering unity and collaboration among the teaching staff, instilling discipline among learners and creating a climate conducive to teaching and learning. Developing instructional leadership characteristics in principals in schools in the rural area of the Eastern Cape could assist greatly in improving teacher and learner motivation and therefore also the overall success of the school.

Bearing in mind the huge impact on a school of a competent and instructional principal, the second recommendation is that the Education Department of the Eastern Cape only employ individuals with the requisite academic and professional qualifications and experience into positions of leadership in schools. Existing principals should be trained to be instructional leaders so as to have a holistic impact on the management of the school curriculum and the developmental needs of the staff.

The third recommendation would be that efforts should be made by the Education Department of the Eastern Cape to find ways to incentivise specialist teachers to take up teaching posts in the rural schools. However, as this was not a focus of this study, it is recommended that an investigation into ways of encouraging specialist teachers to teach in rural schools be the subject of a further research study.

6.3 CONCLUSION

This research examined the impact of instructional leadership and the culture of teaching and learning in ten rural schools in the Eastern Cape. Findings from interviews conducted with educators, principals and education officials, as well the record of Grade 12 performances sought from the Education Department archives, confirm that instructional leadership could have a positive impact on the culture of teaching and learning in Eastern Cape rural schools.

Based on the findings of the research, the accomplishments of the performing school principals reiterates the importance of instructional leadership in schools. There is proof that the role of the principal goes beyond the administrative functions to include the tenets of instructional leadership. Continuous scrutiny of the teaching and learning allows the instructional leader to put in place intervention measures to avert problems before they even begin. For the Eastern Cape to reach a reasonable milestone in the provision of basic education, it is important to have instructional leaders as principals.

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APPENDIX A



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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The importance of education worldwide cannot be over emphasised. The education system in South Africa is fraught with challenges which include poor management of schools by principals, low motivation on the part of learners, indiscipline, inadequate resources and inadequate teaching infrastructure (Kruger, 2003). These issues, amongst many others, have affected the performance of National Senior Certificate (NSC) Grade 12 learners, especially in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. According to Lethoko (cited in Kruger, 2003) the problems of low teacher morale and poor Grade 12 performance have led to a general drive to advance the teaching and learning culture as well as the overall quality of schools in the country. The education sector in South Africa has evolved over the years with formulation and implementation of curriculum reform policies ranging from Curriculum 2005 of 1997 to the Revised National Curriculum Statements (Grades R-9) which was followed by the National Curriculum Statements (NCS, Grades 10-12). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) is the current policy being implemented.

The success of a plethora of policies formulated over the years with a view to improving school performances has, however, been quite doubtful (Jita, 2010). The severity of the problems encountered by the schools in the Eastern Cape and some of the other provinces has nevertheless led to a number of attempts by the education authorities to improve the teaching and learning culture of schools, and these have led to some reforms in the educational sector (Kruger, 2003). These reforms have decentralised the traditionally centralised role played by the Department of Education. Decentralisation entails shifting both educational resources and decision making responsibility away from the Department of Education to schools and communities (Marishane, du Plessis & Botha, 2011). Decentralisation has, in effect, increased the influence of the principal's management role in the success or failure of the school. The role of the principal involves coordination, supervision and control of all teaching and learning activities.

The impact of effective management in any organisation is crucial to the success of that organisation. Management, according to Everard and Morris (1990, cited in UNISA, 2011) is "the process of working with and through individuals and groups and other resources to

1

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The importance of education worldwide cannot be over emphasised. The education system in South Africa is fraught with challenges which include poor management of schools by principals, low motivation on the part of learners, indiscipline, inadequate resources and inadequate teaching infrastructure (Kruger, 2003). These issues, amongst many others, have affected the performance of National Senior Certificate (NSC) Grade 12 learners, especially in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. According to Lethoko (cited in Kruger, 2003) the problems of low teacher morale and poor Grade 12 performance have led to a general drive to advance the teaching and learning culture as well as the overall quality of schools in the country. The education sector in South Africa has evolved over the years with formulation and implementation of curriculum reform policies ranging from Curriculum 2005 of 1997 to the Revised National Curriculum Statements (Grades R-9) which was followed by the National Curriculum Statement (Grades R-12) in 2002.

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APPENDIX B



REF: 2018/07/18/43769683/35/MC

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Department of Education Management, College of Education, University of South
Africa**

**Research Title: The Impact of Instructional Leadership on the Culture of Teaching and
Learning in the Rural Schools of the Eastern Cape**

Date:

The Head of Department
Easter Cape Department of Education

Dear Sir,

I, Abigail Yobe, am doing a research under the supervision of Prof N.P Grootboom, an Associate Professor in the Department of Education Management towards a Master of Education Degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you and some schools in your district to participate in a study entitled “**The Impact of Instructional Leadership on the Culture of Teaching and Learning in The Rural Schools of the Eastern Cape**”.

The aim of the study is to examine if instructional leadership is an effective educational leadership model that can enrich the culture of teaching and learning with a bid to improving the general performance of learners in matric examinations in the Eastern Cape. Your department has been selected because of its role as a major stakeholder in education. The study will entail the use of structured interviews which will be conducted on Heads of schools and

teachers, District Directors and other top education officials. The respondent's participation will involve answering the questions provided and the amount of time required for the completion of the interview will be 15 – 20 minutes.

There are several benefits of this study that would result from the participation of education officials. The benefits in participating in this study include the following:

1. To advance knowledge on the topic of principal's instructional leadership role and its influence on school climate and school performance.
2. The adaptation of instructional leadership practices in the rural underperforming schools of the Eastern Cape based on the impact of this research and the possible interventions that may originate from this research.
3. To benefit the body of knowledge in the area of instructional leadership and education in South Africa.

In terms of risk and discomfort, this study will not in any way involve vulnerable individuals, hence there will be no risk involved. However, participation is absolutely voluntary and participants will participate when it's convenient and suitable for them. There will be no reimbursement or incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail email or a visit to your department.

For further information about this study, please feel free to contact me at abigailyobe@yahoo.com, or 43769683@mylife.unisa.ac.za; 072 372 6228. My supervisor's contact details are Grootbnp@unisa.ac.za; 012 429 6773.

Yours Sincerely

Abigail Yobe

Researcher

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE BUFFALO
CITY METRO DISTRICT OF THE EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION**

**Department of Education Management, College of Education, University of South
Africa**

**Research Title: The Impact of Instructional Leadership on the Culture of Teaching and
Learning in the Rural Schools of the Eastern Cape**

Date

CIRCUIT MANAGER

BCM DISTRICT

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Abigail Yobe, am doing a research under the supervision of Prof N.P Grootboom, an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a Master of Education Degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled “**The Impact of Instructional Leadership on the Culture of Teaching and Learning in The Rural Schools of the Eastern Cape**”.

The aim of this study is to examine if instructional leadership is an effective educational leadership model that can enrich the culture of teaching and learning with a bid to improving the general performance of learners in matric examinations in the Eastern Cape. Your department has been selected because of its role as a major stakeholder in education. The study will entail the use of structured interviews which will be conducted on District Directors, Circuit Managers, Principals and teachers. The respondent's participation will involve answering the questions provided and the amount of time required for the completion of the

interview will be 15 – 20 minutes.

There are several benefits of this study that would result from the participation of education officials. The benefits include the following:

1. To advance knowledge on the topic of principal's instructional leadership role and its influence on school climate and school performance.
2. The adaptation of instructional leadership practices in the rural underperforming schools of the Eastern Cape based on the impact of this research and the possible interventions that may originate from this research.
3. To benefit the body of knowledge in the area of instructional leadership and education in South Africa.

In terms of risk and discomfort, this study will not in any way involve vulnerable individuals, hence there will be no risk involved. However, participation is absolutely voluntary and participants will participate when it's convenient and suitable for them. There will be no reimbursement or incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail email or a visit to your department.

For further information about this study, please feel free to contact me at abigailyobe@yahoo.com, or 43769683@mylife.unisa.ac.za. My supervisor's contact details are Grootbnp@unisa.ac.za; 012 429 6773.

Yours Sincerely

Abigail Yobe
Researcher

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS

Department of Education Management, College of Education, University of South Africa

Research Title: The Impact of Instructional Leadership on the Culture of Teaching and Learning in the Rural Schools of the Eastern Cape

Date.....

The Principal

Buffalo City Metro District

Dear Mr/ Ms

I, Abigail Yobe, am doing a research under the supervision of Prof N.P Grootboom, an Associate Professor in the Department of Education Management towards a Master of Education Degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you and your teachers to participate in a study entitled “**The Impact of Instructional Leadership on the Culture of Teaching and Learning in The Rural Schools of the Eastern Cape**”.

The aim of the study is to examine if instructional leadership is an effective educational leadership model that can enrich the culture of teaching and learning with a bid to improving the general performance of learners in matric examinations in the Eastern Cape. Your school has been selected because this research is going to be conducted on rural schools within the region. The study will entail the use of interviews which will be conducted on the principal and the teachers. The respondent’s participation will involve answering the questions provided and the amount of time required for the completion of the questionnaire will be 15 – 20 minutes.

There are several benefits of this study that would result from the participation of principals

and teachers in rural schools within this region. The benefits in participation in this study include the following:

1. To advance knowledge on the topic of principal's instructional leadership role and its influence on school climate and school performance.
2. The adaptation of instructional leadership practices in the rural schools of the Eastern Cape based on the impact of this research and the possible interventions that may originate from this research.
3. To benefit the body of knowledge in the area of instructional leadership and education in South Africa.

In terms of risk and discomfort, this study will not in any way involve vulnerable individuals, hence there will be no risk involved. However, participation is absolutely voluntary and participants will participate when it's convenient and suitable for them. There will be no reimbursement or incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail email or a visit to your school.

For further information about this study, please feel free to contact me at abigailyobe@yahoo.com, or 43769683@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

Yours Sincerely

Abigail Yobe
Researcher

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Personal Background Information

These questions are about you, your education and your position as a senior education official in the Eastern Cape Department of Education.

Gender

☐ Female ☐ Male

A. Age

Please write a number

☐ Less than 30, ☐ 30years Above

B. Educational Background:

Please mark one choice

- ☐ Diploma in Education
- ☐ Higher National Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor Degree
- ☐ Honours Degree in Education
- ☐ Master degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree or equivalent (Ph.D., M.D.)

C. How many years of work experience do you have?

- ☐ Year(s) working as an education official.
- ☐ Year(s) worked as a formal principal (where applicable)
- ☐ Year(s) worked in other school management roles

1. How would you define instructional leadership?

2. What would you say is the reason for the poor performance in the rural schools within this region? 6. What are the factors that may have contributed to this poor performance?

3. What, in your opinion, are the factors that may have contributed to some schools performing better than the other rural schools?

4. What is your perception of the role of the principal toward school achievement?

5. What is the impact of teacher development towards school performance?

6. In your opinion, would a collaborative culture characterised by mutual support be more effective in increasing school performance than having the principal make all important decisions on their own?

7. Principals are the drivers of educational policies aimed at increasing learner achievement. In your opinion, are principals in rural schools facilitating the implementation of these policies? Please motivate your answer.

8. (A) How would you define the concept of 'instructional leadership'?

(B) Kindly highlight a few examples of the principal's instructional leadership role.

9. Do you think there is a relationship between the instructional leadership role of the principal and the learners' performance? Kindly motivate your answer.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Personal Background Information

These questions are about you, your education and your position as a school head in the Buffalo City Metro.

A. Gender

☐ Female ☐ Male

B. Age

Please write a number

☐☐ Less than 30, ☐☐ 30years Above

C.

Educational

Background:

Please mark one choice

- ☐ Diploma in Education
- ☐ Higher National Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor Degree
- ☐ Honours Degree in Education
- ☐ Master degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree or equivalent (Ph.D., M.D.)

D. How many years of work experience do you have?

- ☐☐ Year(s) working as a principal.
- ☐☐ Year(s) worked as a teacher.
- ☐☐ Year(s) worked in other school management roles (where applicable).

1. How do you define instructional leadership?

2. What is your aim/goal as an instructional leader?

3. How do you see the teacher's role in achieving your goal as an instructional leader?

4. How do you work collaboratively with the teachers in relation to creating a culture of teaching _____ and _____ learning?

5. What, in your opinion, is the purpose of supervision?

6. Do you see the supervision of teaching and learning as part of your responsibility as a principal?

7. What support do you need in order to be a better instructional leader?

8. To what extent does the department of education provide such support to your school and to you _____ as _____ a _____ principal?

9. How have you, as a principal, promoted school-wide teacher development in your school?

10. Briefly describe how you monitor your learners' progress or academic performance of your learners.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

Personal Background Information

These questions are about you, your education and your position as a teacher in the Buffalo City Metro.

A. Gender

☐ Female ☐ Male

B. Age

Please write a number

☐☐ Less than 30, ☐☐ 30years Above

C.

Educational

Background:

Please mark one choice

- ☐ Diploma in Education
- ☐ Higher National Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor Degree
- ☐ Honours Degree in Education
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree or equivalent (Ph.D., M.D.)

D. How many years of work experience do you have?

- ☐☐ Year(s) working as an education official
- ☐☐ Year(s) worked as a formal principal (where applicable)
- ☐☐ Year(s) worked in other school management roles

1. How do you define instructional leadership?

2. How do you perceive the instructional leadership role of your principal in creating a culture of teaching and learning?

3. Briefly highlight some characteristics of your principal that impact on his/her instructional

leadership role in creating a culture of teaching and learning.

4. What are the measures your principal has utilised to promote teacher development?

5. Briefly explain how your principal empowers you to improve the teaching and learning culture of the school.

6. Briefly explain how your principal guides and monitors the delivery of instructions at your school.

7. (a) What are the challenges that confront your principal in creating a culture of teaching and learning?

(b) How do you overcome these challenges?

8. Briefly describe how your principal monitors the academic progress of learners at your school.

APPENDIX H

NANETTE J LÖTTER

PROFESSIONAL EDITING AND TRANSLATING

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the accompanying dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in Education Leadership and Management and titled: *The impact of instructional leadership on the culture of teaching and learning in rural schools of the Eastern Cape* by Ms Abigail Yobe has been electronically edited and is of a suitably high standard in terms of language, syntax and spelling.



5/11/2018

Nanette J Lotter

MA (Linguistics and Translation) APed, APTrans

South African Translators' Institute (Accredited Professional Editor and Translator)

Cell No: 082 2024 244

Email: nanette.lotter@gmail.com

APPENDIX I



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/07/18

Ref: **2018/07/18/43769683/35/MC**

Name: Mrs A Yobe

Student: 43769683

Dear Mrs Yobe

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2018/07/18 to 2021/07/18

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs A Yobe
E-mail address: 43769683@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 72 372 6228

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr NP Grootboom
E-mail address: Grootbnp@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 12 429 6773

Title of research:

The impact of Instructional leadership on the culture of Teaching and Learning in rural schools of the Eastern Cape

Qualification: M. Ed. in Education Leadership and Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/07/18 to 2021/07/18.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/07/18 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Phone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2023/07/18**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2018/07/18/43769683/35/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa
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PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
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